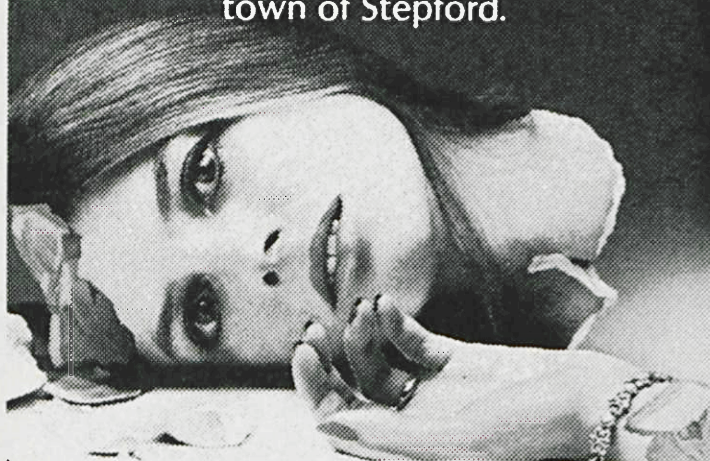




Something strange is happening in the town of Stepford.



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## TALES I TELL MY MOTHER

by Zoe Fairbairns, Sara Maitland, Valerie Miner, Michele Roberts and Michelene Wandor.



## CAPITAL & CLASS

*Capital & Class* is the journal of the CSE. Members receive three issues of *Capital & Class* a year and regular newsletters and are entitled to attend the annual conference. Working and local CSE groups meet regularly during the year.

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ANNIE WRIGHT & OTHERS



Angela Phillips



Rozsika Parker



Val Wilmer



Susan Hemmings



Amanda Sebestyen



Sally

Linda Phillips

This Spare Rib—our sixth birthday issue—focuses on how we are seen, and how we, as women, see ourselves.

For the last nine months we've been grappling with lots of visual ideas which we decided to put together in one issue to show how we can use images to challenge existing views of women. We use conventional forms like the comic strip (see page 6) but with a very different happy ever after. . . .

We want to continue to have more contributions like these in future Spare Ribs—if you've got any ideas, get in touch.

And we'd welcome any response to the work in this issue, so tell us what you think.

**Cover** by Lucy Williams

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I work with a firm connected with film and there are odd stills left lying around the offices. In this case it was pure coincidence that the cleaners left their hoovers against the wall where the still of this woman was propped up — Brenda Prince.

# PICTURE POST

## To SPARE RIB 27 Clerkenwell Close London EC1

"Do you draw, collage, paint, take photographs, knit, embroider?" we asked.

These are some of the contributions we received—there will be more in future issues.

### Feminist on the trains

Dear *Spare Rib*

I am 19 and work for British Rail. From my experience I have decided that we feminists are in the minority. There are very few women on the traffic side of the railway, and the ones that are fill the lower grades and the less physical jobs, ie. ticket barriers at Waterloo and platform duties. I have only ever met *one* female shunter. I myself am the first and only female (travelling) passenger guard on my division. These few women I have met are much older than me (mostly over 35, I think) and are even more astounded than men to see me on my trains. A lady who works in our Guildford buffet said "... they must have been hard up for staff to take a girl ..."—to my face!

I never see anyone on my trains reading *Spare Rib* and I don't know any feminists. If anyone reading

this sees me *please* give me a wave as I'm beginning to feel I'm the only feminist in the world! All my trains are out of Waterloo and go as far as Portsmouth, Reading and Windsor, and all SW suburban lines. Yours

Helena Wojtczak  
London SW19

### \*Separate but safe?

Dear *Spare Rib*

I write in response to Ms Howell's letter in *SR 70* regarding her suggestion that the women's movement should press for separate carriages for women on British Rail. Surely this idea runs counter to the basic aims of the movement. Is not society already too 'compartmentalised'? Our aim must be to unite people, not to divide them even more. Rape and violence etc. are all facets of society which are endemic to our lack of communication, honesty and openness with each other. If we can break down barriers of class, religion and sex, this would be far more conducive to a healthier society than trying to separate and detach people further.

To completely alienate one sex from another, even as a reaction to real or apparent threats, is only to surrender to the pressures resulting from the hierarchical, male-dominated society we currently suffer under. Such surrender is counter-productive and it is essential that we find alternative ways to infiltrate and change the 'system' in a more subtle and constructive way, and we must do it together.

Jenny Nichol  
Orpington, Kent

### \*Look out

Dear *Spare Rib*

I am a middle aged reader of my daughter's *Spare Rib*. Congratulations on such a good magazine. One thing I would like to say, however, is that women seem to be looking inwardly too much at their own problems, important as they are, while outside in the big wide world the men as ever are making history. Women as a group seem not sufficiently aware nor do they get together on the major issues of our time, and if we are not careful, we will allow once more the men to dictate the conditions that our children will have to live or die in. For example, how many of us are in favour of more nuclear power (as one of your readers has already asked); do we tolerate more radiation, more chemical hazards for our children, or do we think we need these technologies for our survival? What do we as a group think of the amount of money spent on scientific research, not to mention military research; do we think recombinant genetic research is necessary; do we in fact know anything about it? How many women read, say, the *New Scientist* to find out what is going on behind the scenes?

Yours sincerely  
Sheila Haynes  
Talybont, Dyfed



This drawing is my attempt to illustrate much of what I feel and often hear discussed about the attitudes of men, particularly those who are 'sympathetic' to the Women's Liberation Movement. I hope it conveys some of the confusions and misrepresentations that occur with tokenism — Penny Delmon.

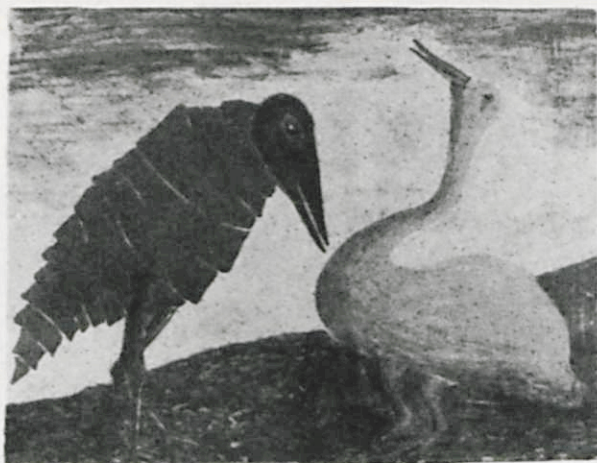


## \*Smear incentive

Dear *Spare Rib*

What S Pennington's 'sympathetic' doctor failed to point out is that the DHSS pays GPs a fee for doing smears for women over 35, or who have had three pregnancies, but not for others; this is because these women are considered to be at greatest risk and that GPs should invite them along for regular screening. Perhaps S Pennington's doctor will only do smears she is paid for.

Yours truly  
Peter Godfrey  
Bristol



Porcelain plaque, painted with enamels (8x6")



Tuskless elephant tile, painted with underglaze colours (6x6")

## \*Smear campaign

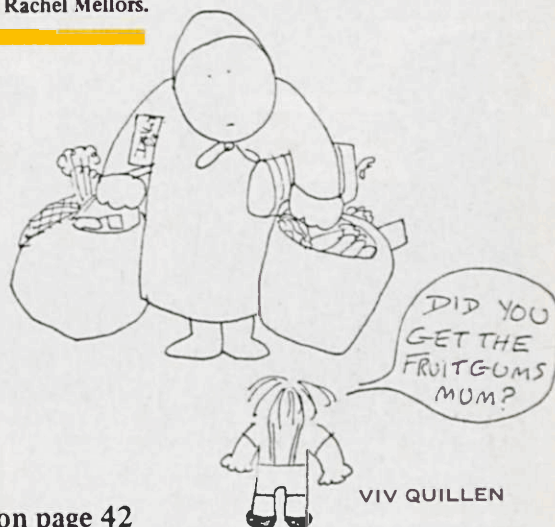
Dear *Spare Rib*

I'm writing in response to S Pennington's letter (SR 70) about cutbacks on smear tests under the NHS. I am 31 and have managed somehow to get a smear test, roughly one per year, since I was 18. In the past I could always get a smear test done at a VD clinic, where it is done automatically. If I asked for one at the Brook Clinic (in Tottenham Court Road and Walworth, London) they always gave me one, and they are free. I asked for a smear test at my local Family Planning Clinic. My experience lately is that I am often told that I need only one smear test every three years, but I have insisted on it yearly and I have

never been refused.

Until we are allowed by law to do our own smear tests, it is our right to maintain our health and to receive NHS help in that, so we must keep fighting for it. If your own area is particularly bad, it might be worth forming a group to press for regular smear tests.

Love and sisterhood  
Jennifer Armitage  
East Twickenham, Middlesex



continued on page 42

MARY TOMS



"Mrs Toms, how do you keep your floors so shiny?"  
Oil painting (22½x22½")

I'm a painter living on the West Coast of Scotland. Outwardly I play a very conventional role: married to a GP, making a bloody good job of raising my daughters - i.e. officially a housewife.... i.e. I have no "job" because I don't go "out" to work or get paid. But, underneath the surface there's a whole lot going on that few know anything about. For a couple of years now, since the girls have been at school, I have been gradually retrieving my individuality (identity). Basically this has taken the form of furiously reading American and British feminist literature, and trying to reconcile these ideas with the traditional role of West Coast housewife. My paintings are the result.

I am actually a trained artist. In fact I've even got a degree in Fine Art. But for years - I'm 31 - I turned my back on it all and became the greatest mum and housewife this side of Glencoe. Now it's coming back, but totally changed and this time I've got something heartfelt to say - Mary Toms.



Women with cats and spirits, watercolour.

RENEE BAILEY

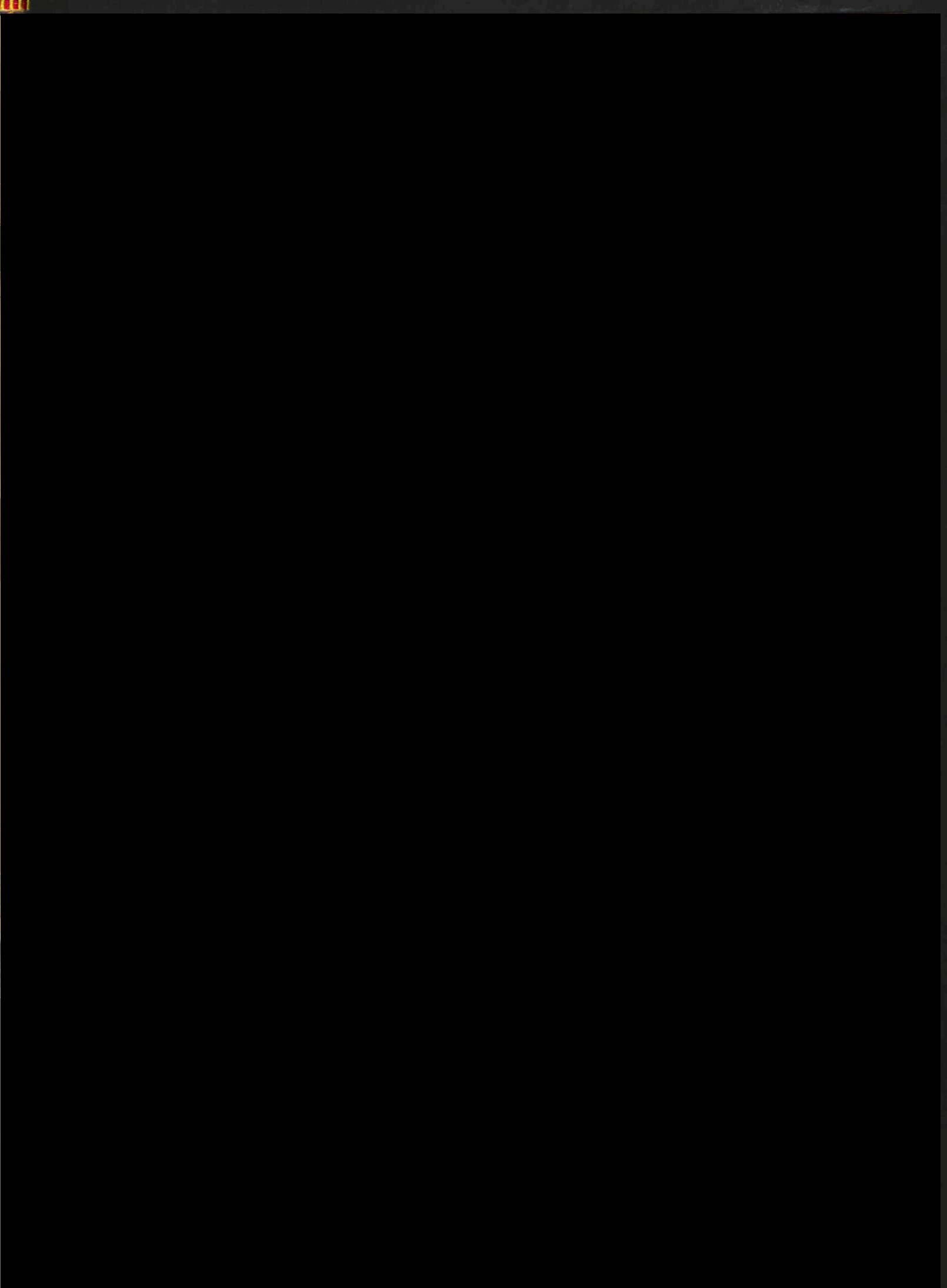














## SEXISM DRAGS ON

*Grooming for Girls* is the name of a brand new book recently purchased for the library of Woodhouse School, the last surviving mixed grammar school in London. It nestles among a selection of works such as *Frankly Feminine* and *Good Grooming* for the edification of female students. Sixth formers Purna Sen and Fiona Marks were already somewhat irritated by the sexism of their school: cookery is compulsory for girls but not for boys; girls are not encouraged to do technical subjects, and on ceremonial occasions male domination is celebrated by allowing the head boy to make a speech—the head girl does not. These books were the last straw.

There's no space on their curriculum for discussing anything which isn't likely to be on an exam paper. "The only opportunity for discussion is in the debating society where there's an annual debate on 'A Woman's Place is in the Home'" Purna told us. So they decided to

make a public protest. Judiciously inviting the local press along, they arrived at school wearing boys' uniforms and announced their intention of doing so every day until the books were removed.

The headmaster reacted with almost unbelievable pomposity. Summoning them to his office he gave them a lecture on freedom of speech and book-banning, then suspended them from school. Fairly drastic action considering they were both within weeks of doing 'A' levels. He only relented when they signed agreements to do nothing further that might displease him. Nevertheless, they were segregated from the other pupils, having to arrive five minutes before every exam and leave the premises afterwards.

Was the headmaster afraid that other students might start swapping clothes too? Or that they might pick up on what Fiona and Purna were really protesting about: sexism, subject segregation, lack of democracy and the web of petty, constricting rules which schools employ to ensure that students don't rock society's boat.

The protest hasn't had much effect on the rest of the class who, according to Fiona, "have already been brainwashed to defend the system; they think exams are all that matter. But the support we've had from the younger kids is really great". Which doesn't bode too well for their headmaster's future peace of mind. O

## Uniform Protest

I'd been working as a district nurse in Lewisham, South London, for 18 months when I stopped wearing the uniform provided (navy dress, blazer and pill-box hat). Two days later I was suspended. A week later — sacked.

I disliked wearing uniform because most of my work involved home visits and I felt uniform created a communication barrier and — more disturbing — could be used to exert power in an already unequal nurse/patient relationship.

Male district nurses have to wear a simple grey suit, quite unlike

a uniform. Although this is sex discrimination, the Equal Opportunities Commission aren't interested because they agree with management that a grey suit constitutes a uniform.

Having lost three internal appeals (though management stress that my work was totally satisfactory) I have now requested a Regional Health Authority appeal prior to an industrial tribunal on unfair dismissal grounds. The Area Health Authority claim my action constituted 'insubordination' and insisted uniform was necessary though this is not stated in their rules, my contract or the Whitley handbook (pay and conditions of service for nurses nationally). Strange, when the issue had the support of two Confederation of Health Service Employees branches, several doctors and my patients. Whose wishes and needs control the NHS? O Georgina Lee

*Georgina is interested in other health workers' experiences and the possibility of forming an action group around these issues. Contact her at: 9 Burnt Ash Lane, Bromley, Kent (01-460 1833).*



ANGELA PHILLIPS

David Ennals, Secretary for Social Services, announced on May 16 that the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital would be closed on July 21 — so three days later we closed Euston Road (a main through road in the centre of London) in protest, sitting in the middle of it and singing.

He has now postponed the closure, but still says this historic hospital run by women for women will have to go. Staff and patients at the hospital (*seen here taking part in the protest*) and unions and feminists outside, are fighting on; the picket is to be increased, and lightning strikes in other hospitals are planned. EGA still stays OK! O

## EGYPT: Battle over belly-dancing

Belly-dancing may soon be banned in Egypt, where a group of 30 Conservative MPs say it is not Islamic and goes against the Koran.

This is not of course a pro-woman proposal — it's seen as a test case for reinforcing Egypt's status as a major Islamic country. Other laws to follow could include stoning to death for adultery, whipping for drinking alcohol and mutilation for theft.

Retired Air Marshal Saad El Din Sherrif, the bill's proposer, says: "I'm not an extremist. For example I have no objection to women going out of their houses for shopping or meeting their friends. But in Islam a woman is only allowed to show her face and hands in public. That is why I am opposed to belly-dancing."

Such a ban would be bad news for Egypt's tourist revenue.

Meanwhile, back in Britain, the Coal Board is boosting Tunisia's tourist revenue and its own sales by offering free holidays in Tunisia to those miners who persuade the most people to buy solid fuel central heating. At Manton Colliery in Nottinghamshire they booked a belly-dancer to sell the idea to the boys — "a lunchtime treat" they called it.

It's a long way from the bars and clubs—but belly dancing was started by women and for women. It was a preparation for childbirth, loosening up muscles, and during the birth itself other women would dance around the one in labour, moaning in solidarity. There's a funny new book out about a feminist belly dancer who changes the world: *The Great American Belly Dance* by Daniela Gioseffi (NEL £4.95). O

## US: Lay off or pay up

A New York secretary has won a cool 10,000 dollars in a sexual harassment case — the largest such award in state history.

Barbara Taibi accused her boss — James Robertson, director of advertising at the giant Monsanto Textiles firm — of making "derogatory remarks, sexual innuendoes and sexual advances" after she was promoted to his department in 1975. Claiming she was fired for refusing to have sex with him, she filed a complaint with the state division of human rights.

Last summer a division examiner found probable cause for the complaint and a further hearing was scheduled for later this year. Monsanto freaked and settled out of court, still lamely protesting Robertson's innocence. O

## IRAN: No torture?

The National Women's Liberation Conference in April sent a telegram to the Iranian Embassy in protest at the imprisonment of Vida Hadjebi Tabrizi, a former sociologist at Tehran University. She was sentenced to seven years in Iran's notorious jails by a closed military tribunal in 1972. No charges against her were made public.

The Embassy has replied to the Conference Planning Group 'emphatically' rejecting the 'spurious allegations'. They defend her imprisonment on the grounds

that she was once married to a communist, has associated with 'anti-Iranian' groups (which would presumably now include the Women's Liberation Movement) and shows no remorse for the crime they allege she committed. They still decline to say what she was charged with, or to give any evidence.

However, it seems the Iranian Government is getting sensitive about foreign criticism—they now at least say they no longer torture political prisoners. Their response to our telegram suggests we should go on protesting. O

Contact Committee Against Repression in Iran, Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.





MARINA JACQUES

"Women united against rape" — Aix en Provence, May 2

## FRANCE: RAPE LAWS CHALLENGED

After nearly four years, Anne Tonglet and Aracelli Castellano have succeeded in bringing to jury trial the three men who raped them in a village near Aix en Provence in the summer of 1974. The two day trial drew pickets in support of both the defence and the prosecution — this resulted in violent clashes. The two women were fighting to make the trial a test case on the question of "consent" and to expose the fact that rapists are protected by a rape law under which, as one of the women said: "The fact of being alive is considered proof of consent. Blows, insults, violent attacks on different parts of the body, threats of death — none of this is admitted as proof of rape." In French law, a woman has to prove that she fought back with equal resistance throughout the attack or be assumed to have consented.

Though the women reported to the police immediately and were sent to hospital for medical tests, the examining magistrate whom they saw the next day decided that anyone who preferred to submit to physical assault rather than risk her life had clearly not been raped. As is accepted practice in 20% of rape cases in France, she refused to send the men for jury trial and reduced the charges to assault and battery. The women had not only suffered

rape but had also been humiliated by both doctors and the police. They decided to make a public stand and at a police court the following year were able to persuade the presiding magistrate that the court was "incompetent to hear the case". It was sent to jury trial but was again held up as the men appealed against the decision. Finally, early this May, the trial came to court and the three men were exposed to the massive publicity they had been trying to avoid. They got sentences of six years and four years.

The case brought many women together to fight the common belief that "a woman should be held responsible for the aggression she has suffered". It also raised an important debate among French feminists, many of whom were concerned about the length of sentences handed out. They feel that the point of the campaign is not to encourage repressive sentences but to change public attitudes to rape, and the rape law itself. As Anne and Aracelli said in their statement to the International Tribunal On Crimes Against Women in 1976: "We are fighting for our principles, to change the law and to change the way people think. Our goal is to provide the maximum publicity possible for this rape, with publication in the press of

these men's names. We demand no heavier penalty. That is not our object. Men have invented prisons. Let them assume responsibility for them."

Some of these goals have been achieved. The attackers were forced out of the privacy of a magistrates' court to account for their actions in public. With feminist lawyer Giselle Halimi of "Chosir" prosecuting, the jury were persuaded that a woman doesn't necessarily have to be murdered or found bound hand and foot to prove she didn't consent. But the presiding judge was determined not to "allow the trial to be a public debate", and cut short wider discussion about rape. ○

### Married rape

In Adelaide, South Australia, the Supreme Court has found a man guilty of raping his wife. This is the first conviction under a law passed in 1976 recognising that rape can exist within marriage.

The man was separated from his wife, but it still took the jury two hours to agree that he raped her. Had they been living together, the decision might have been different. Still, it should help other women stand up to violent husbands. ○

## PARIS BOOKSHOP ATTACKED

"La Librairie des Femmes", a feminist bookshop in Paris run by the "politics and psychoanalysis" collective, was violently attacked on May 12 and again on May 17.

The first time eight hooded women stormed in, held back the one woman who was there, cut the telephone wires, spraypainted and knocked down books and shelves, set off tear gas bombs then fled with a group of men who'd been waiting outside.

The next day a communique signed "Les Bombeuses a Chapeau" (The Hooded Bombers) was published in the leftwing daily *Liberation*. It denounced all feminist actions that excluded men as being against women's interests and said the bookshop had been selected as a women's business "though other groups could have been (and very well may be) aimed at".

"These feminists are our enemies, on the same grounds as the State, cops and leftists" they stated. Their politics are unclear — they could be part of an extreme right group and are clearly actively supported by men.

*Liberation* then received a second communique denying the bookshop's version of the attack, criticising them for telling the police and hinting at further attacks.

A meeting at the bookshop to discuss what to do was planned for May 18. That night shots were fired into the empty shop, bullets smashing the glass doors and lodging in the ceiling.

An unsigned communique following this attack connected it to the first.

The "politics and psychoanalysis" tendency (which also publishes *des femmes en mouvement*, see Shortlist SR 71) has been politically opposed by many other French feminists, but this is seen as an attack on the movement as a whole and the bookshop is getting a lot of support. Meetings are being held, a party is planned to celebrate the movement's strength and the shop is full of flowers with banners outside saying "Long live women's struggles: first round we conquered oppression, second round we'll conquer repression". ○

*Librairie des Femmes, 70 rue des Saints-Peres, Paris 75007. (Thanks to 'Paris Metro' for information).*

### Name change

\* Children in Finland will automatically take their mother's surname under a Government bill expected to be passed soon. If both parents agree, a child can still be given the father's name. A woman will also have the right to keep her own name after marriage and a man may adopt his wife's name. The slow dawn of the matriarchy! ○



## Managing women

"The Women Manager – Towards the 21st Century" was the theme of a seminar held recently by a group called 'Women in Management' (WIM). Ideologically unsound? Not half. No space here to discuss all the contradictions – the best warning against women becoming bosses is in Virginia Woolf's recently republished *Three Guineas*: "Before us lies the public world, the professional system, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its pugnacity, its greed . . ."

WIM aims to promote women's advancement in all the 'decision-

making areas', not just commerce and industry, but the professions, government departments etc. We all know how few women judges, ambassadors, consultants, cabinet ministers there are. Isn't it about time we had our fair share of the power to run other people's lives?!

Of the three workshops, the first discussed how women are discriminated against, both directly and indirectly, by unimaginative training and recruitment policies, and concluded that women "have a considerable personal responsibility to assert themselves". The second discussed the role of trade unions and women's organisations, concluding that women's pressure groups should "participate in the power structure" and should work more closely with official bodies

such as the EOC. The third workshop discussed family life and attitudes, made suggestions such as the increased use of 'flexi-time' so that men could take a fair share in child-rearing, emphasised the need for the social stigma to be removed from the career woman – but, predictably, did not consider the possibilities of alternatives to the nuclear family.

The boys present, representatives of the firms which had sponsored the seminar (what a giveaway), made remarks like "In my experience, the girls who fail are the ones who try to act like men."

"We want women to win, but not at the expense of men", said the only male member of WIM. But how can this happen, in their highly competitive world, rigidly

divided into 'the managers' and 'the managed', where the number of top jobs is limited, and more top women must mean fewer top men?

The emphasis was on co-operation, not conflict – with existing management, with men and with other women. But you better decide which side you're on. The two trade unionists invited to take part encountered severe opposition when they urged that WIM should recommend trade union membership for all women.

A founder member of WIM is Virginia Novarra, a Principal in the Civil Service, who was one of the originators of the feminist magazine *Women's Report*. She commented wryly that the fight will not be over until women have won the right to be *mediocre* in their jobs! O Lucy Whitman  
Contact WIM c/o Eleanor Macdonald, 4 Mapledale Ave, Croydon (01-654 4659).



ANGELA PHILLIPS

A gentleman drinker tries hard not to notice as 40 women in drag act out their fantasies in El Vino's, the Fleet St wine bar that bans women from standing at the bar or buying drinks there at all. We were protesting against an industrial tribunal ruling that this was perfectly acceptable 'chivalry', protecting women from being pushed and jostled. Handbags take up so much room on the counter and women's poor little toes get squashed.

Justice Ruttle insisted that 'chivalry' was not sex discrimination. So we quickly formed the Women Against Chivalry Movement—or Boys Against Ladies Liberation (BALLS!). O

## UNFAIR PARTNERS

When six doctors – one woman and five men – were setting up a joint practice in London, they asked Hempton's, a solicitor's firm well-known in medical circles, to draw up a contract for their partnership as GPs.

Hempton's blithely suggested a clause requiring the woman to retire if she "married and had children" and was, in the men's judgement, unable to pull her weight "due to her domestic commitments".

Furious, the woman – who in fact already has all the children she wants – approached the National Council for Civil Liberties, who assured her that the clause infringed the Sex Discrimination Act, as there were six or more partners involved. But the NCCL would now like to hear from other women in partnerships (medical, legal or business) to assess how widespread such potential discrimination is. O

Contact Jean Coussins, NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1 (01-278 4575).

## RIDE ON...

I've always been keen to ride motorcycles but was scared off when, at 14, I learnt the wrong way cornering and tipped over my brother's prize possession. But I never really accepted that bikes were for men only. So when the Institute of Motorcycling held a two-wheel test day, inviting "journalists – in particular women who hadn't ridden before" to come along and test, off I went, nervous but excited.

Along with women from *Woman's Own*, *Over 21* and the rest, I signed my life away on an indemnity form which constantly referred to the

rider as 'he' despite assurances that this year the event was geared towards women.

Fitted up with helmets, we were steered towards instructors from Schools Traffic Education Programme (STEP). If you buy a new bike it can be delivered to them and when you collect it you get four hours training at a minimal cost, sometimes even free – negotiate with your dealer! They plonked us on mopeds, briefed us, then encouraged even the greenest to get straight out on the track. Having buzzed round in circles for a while, we found the original promise to teach us to ride not being fulfilled. We drifted round looking at various makes of bike and trying out a scooter or two. But every time one

of us who hadn't ridden before asked to be shown how to change gears or something, it was clear that she wasn't a 'bikey' and the men showed reluctance to spend the time. Those who had ridden before and so were a little braver boldly fronted up to manufacturers and got bikes to ride but little help or information.

But for many women the hours dragged by and over lunch a feeling of being fobbed off was obvious – One woman said she'd given up because she found it hard to handle changing gears as the clutch levers were so stiff – when she'd complained they'd said "Yes they are pretty hard" and left it at that.

With renewed courage we returned and by being more

persistent found a man on the Honda team who spent time explaining and encouraging. Despite sniggers and snide remarks from his colleagues he got us on 'proper' motorcycles and it was great to see the woman who'd been too weak to change gears holding her own on a CB100N. He said his daughter started riding motorcycles at five and was now a seasoned scrambler at 13! There was no holding us then and by the time we went home, two were all set to buy bikes the next day!

If we could get that far in one day-out on their terms, think what we could do with a full-time feminist motorcycle workshop! O Carole Spedding



# Husband makes bid for wife's body

A father has no legal right to stop his wife having an abortion, Sir George Baker has ruled in Liverpool High Court. *Not* of course because it's the woman's right to choose what to do with her body, but because under the 1967 Act it's a medical decision, concerned only with the health of the mother and foetus. If two doctors decide 'in good faith' that a woman needs an abortion, she's legally entitled to one.

Joan Paton's husband William got a temporary court order to postpone her having an abortion, and took her to court on the grounds that the 'baby' was half his. Now that he's lost his case—and Joan has had her abortion—he's changed lawyers and intends to appeal. He agrees that the judgement was perfectly correct under the 1967 Act—but wants to get the whole Act overturned in the courts. Paton is backed by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. Yes, those who normally scream that the mother's feelings are irrelevant—because to them it is only the foetus that matters—are jumping in to say it isn't fair that the father has no say... It's clear that they'll say and do anything to get abortion banned; if they can't do it in Parliament, they'll try to outrule Parliament in court.

It's wonderful propaganda for them and the press is swallowing it—think of that poor heartbroken father... In fact he had stopped his wife's allowance and she had started divorce proceedings before he even knew she was pregnant. The press seemed to think it perfectly fair that he should go on about divorcing *her* if she went through with the abortion, but expect their relationship to be rosy if he forced her to go through nine months pregnancy against her will.

As long as it is women's bodies that carry and give birth to children there can be no 'equality of rights' between the mother and the father about abortion and childbirth—they affect the mother infinitely more. If the man who merely contributed the sperm had to be consulted about abortion, the woman would have no freedom to choose what to do with her own body and life.○

\* **Tameside National Abortion Campaign** and supporters from all over North West England marched to Tameside General Hospital on May 20, protesting because a gynaecologist there had been forced to stop doing early safe abortions by menstrual extraction. Putting this service out of action was a great victory for anti-abortionists; it has made menstrual extraction a very hazy area legally.○



JINI RAWLINGS

Jubilant in Fleet St when we heard over a car radio that Bill Paton had lost his case. Having picketed the High Court, we had wandered down the road and sat down in the middle, stopping all the traffic while we watched street theatre (*see insert*), sang and chanted.

Meanwhile in Liverpool, feminists demonstrated outside the court where the trial was taking place. Anti-abortionists were out too, with placards proclaiming "Bill Paton is Top of the Pops".○

## JEANS SQUABBLE

The latest Pretty Polly tights ad—showing two pairs of long skinny legs in see-through skirts with an absurdly exaggerated triangle of light at the crotch, some designer's fantasy of how a women's body ought to be put together—has enraged not only us but also competitors within the fashion industry.

Supertramp Clothing Company are indignant at the slogan—"Looks like jeans are on their last legs", which follows on from "When was the last time a man said you had a great pair of jeans?". Supertramp claim that "Men prefer to see women in jeans because they reveal the whole shape from the waist down. Wearing a dress only

spotlights the calf and ankle area." (Unless it's see-through of course...)

Supertramp challenged Pretty Polly to a duel—a fashion/leg show in front of an all-male audience who'd give points for the outfits with the most sex-appeal—jeans or dresses.

But Pretty Polly say the poster is "tongue in cheek... designed to appeal mainly to women, not men". Or rather to what women learn that men want to see.○  
*More on sexist ads on page 18*

## NEWS COPYDATES

SR 73 – June 22

SR 74 – July 27

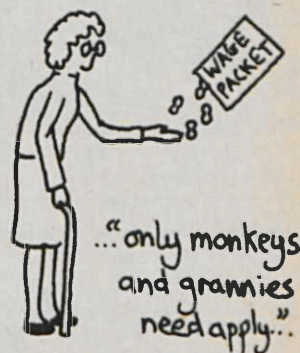
**It's worth trying after these dates. PLEASE KEEP SENDING US YOUR NEWS – PHOTOS TOO!**

Newsshorts by Jill Nicholls, Angela Phillips, Ruth Wallsgrove

\* Two women fruit packers in Canterbury, fighting sex discrimination on the farm, have been awarded an out of court settlement worth £3,600. ...

\* When 18-year-old Alison Hicks dyed her hair from bleach to blue to crimson and aubergine, her boss at Giggles hairdresser in Bristol sacked her. She had become "grotesque and a laughing stock" he said, and an industrial tribunal supported him. Little girls should be seen—but shouldn't go too far...

\* Timothy Veasey took Coventry Turned Parts Ltd to an industrial tribunal because he, and the local Job Centre, were told that the machinist's job he applied for was for women only. He lost. Worse, the company said the job was more suitable for a woman because "it was so boring that a monkey could be trained to do it". However they managed to persuade the tribunal that they had discriminated on age rather than sex – it wasn't fit for a *young* man because it was a dead end job.....



\* Some 500 women bank note examiners at the Bank of England print department in Debden, Essex, walked out in May over a closed shop dispute. Twenty women members of SOGAT (the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades) had been suspended for complaining about the removal of union members from certain machines and their replacement by non-unionists. The other women supported them and were sacked.

They are now picketing the print works; strongly backed by SOGAT they are determined to halt the flow of new notes until they are reinstated...

\* Women are barred from an undersea tunnel now under construction in northern Japan, linking the cities of Aomori and Hokodate, because the men working there say the tunnel is guarded by the goddess Sanjin, supposedly jealous of other women. In 1968 a woman journalist went down followed three years later by women working for the construction company along with some of the men's wives. But a minor flood accident soon after was seen as a warning.... What will they think of next?!○

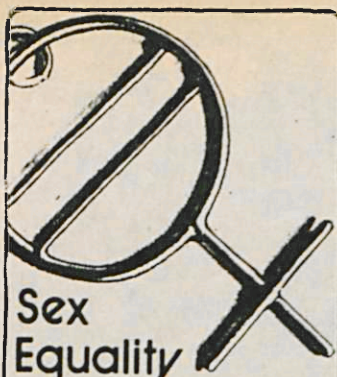


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Ireland*

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# tass

**thanks Spare Rib for its  
coverage of trade union struggles  
for women's rights and  
liberation**

**AUEW~TASS, Onslow Hall,  
Little Green, Richmond, Surrey**



# MISSISSIPPI WOMEN

We always were good actors. A white man here in Ruleville said to me,

"Miz. Hamer, we never realised you-all wasn't happy and contented."

I told him, I said, "Mr. So-and-so, sometimes I be grinning all up in your face but the truth of it is I'd be wanting to stick a knife through your neck."

— Fannie Lou Hamer

"Mississippi is a worn-out state. There is little creativity left amongst the people who run it." This once-rich state in America's Deep South where white landowners made millions from cotton and the unpaid labour of transported Africans, today has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the USA. The majority of people are descended from slaves; despite de-segregation, their position remains inequitable. Mississippi — the name itself is synonymous with racial oppression of the most appalling kind: a lynching occurred as recently as 1955, the victim a 14-year-old boy. Today there are even plans for the South Western area to break away and form an all-black "New African Republic".

In every sense of the word, Mississippi is impoverished. Education is not yet compulsory. The double oppression that black women experience is magnified by the poverty that exists as a result of crushing unemployment. With an economy based on agriculture, mechanised farming put the unskilled out of work. For the majority of women, the main refuge lies in early pregnancy. With little hope of employment, a future on Welfare is indicated.

To achieve the integration that 'officially' exists; there was bloodshed in the 1960s. It is only 14 years since three Civil Rights workers were shot dead for their political activity and buried in a dam. Val Wilmer has been documenting the lives of some black women there. When she sought permission to photograph in schools, a white administrator, notorious for his brutal treatment of black children, asked: "Why do you want to do that? When you say those three words — black, women, Mississippi — you immediately conjure up some sort of a picture". Precisely, she told him, another window on the richest country in the world.

## Fannie Lou Hamer

On August 31, 1962, Fannie Lou Hamer was one of 18 blacks who attempted to register to vote in Ruleville, a small town in the Mississippi cotton belt. "From then on, I became like a wanted criminal."

Fannie Lou Hamer started work, picking cotton, at the age of six. She was one of the first women to fight for the right of blacks to vote in the Deep South, a right that was constitutionally theirs yet disputed and blocked by local whites who attempted to stop voter registration through a combination of intimidation, coercion and farcical 'intelligence tests'. "If I had been a man at that time, I'd have been swinging from a tree. A black man? They would have hung him for doing the same things that I done."

She was fired from the plantation where she worked after being given the option of withdrawing her application or keeping her job. She refused and became one of the most vocal figures in the Civil



Rights struggle. Hounded for her political activities in her own town, she and her husband were forced to leave their home. One of the houses where they sought refuge was riddled with gunfire shortly after they left.

Fannie Lou Hamer was brutally beaten by the police, jailed and then beaten again by black inmates paid for the job. She died last year at the age of 60 in a South no longer turbulent and where it is sometimes hard to believe that such events took place a mere decade ago. ▶

Perry and  
Fannie Lou Hamer,  
Ruleville,  
Mississippi, 1976.

ALL PHOTOS BY VAL WILMER





*Sadie Saddlers  
and Beulah Rush.  
Shaw, Mississippi,  
1972.*

*Beulah Rush, born  
1891, has lived in  
Mississippi all her life.  
Her own grandmother  
was taken from  
Africa as a child.*

## Beulah Rush

I worked hard. I stood at the ironing board and washed and ironed for white folks all night long. I'd leave the board, cook my breakfast and go on to the field and make the day. I picked 350, 375 pounds of cotton a day. Talking 'bout *hard* — cooking for white folks, I've done it. I come up a *hard* way, raised kids — you couldn't make it. My husband was the main thing, he was *nice* to me. But we didn't want to get under and press because if you get *on* the white folks, they going to get all the money, everything you had. They take your mules, your corn, everything. Some of them even take your potatoes — you wouldn't have nothing to live on, they didn't care.

I used to lay down and cry, cry, cry under the crush, but I didn't see no way to get out of it. Just to ride to Memphis or Chicago was thousands of miles away in my mind. I didn't think I could take 20 dollars or 40 dollars and go to Chicago. So many people just came to the light of it. I had to stay.

## Pat White

The average age of our clinic patients, I guess, is about 15. When they're 19 they've been pregnant three times. My goal, I guess, is to try to reach them. But nowadays more and more girls are wanting pregnancies and not necessarily wanting the package that goes with it — like the marriage. There's more types of birth control methods than there ever was and the birthrate is still increasing. Most girls are getting sexually active earlier and if they've been having sex for a couple of years and they're not getting pregnant then they come to the clinic to have tests run to find out why.

Most of them are amazed when I tell them I was pregnant as a teenager. But once you achieve that, you start looking at things and see what else you do need. An education — especially when you have a child and you don't want that child to be a dropout. I do like to tell the girls of my experience and how it can be done. I think maybe I've reached a couple.

*Pat White works as a midwife in Mound Bayou, all-black town in Mississippi founded at the end of the last century by freed slaves.*



*Midwife Pat White with patient in labour.*





*Ruby Lee Blanche. Bentonla, Mississippi, 1974.*



*La Wanda and Ruby Lee Blanche.*

## Ruby Lee Blanche

I said 'I want to be licenced to preach, I want authority to carry God's word'. The Methodists are different to the Baptists, you see. I've heard people say no woman didn't have no business preaching, but since I've been licenced to preach, I've did quite a bit of reading. When the three women went to the Sepulchre to anoint Christ's body there weren't any men around. The angel told them the message from Christ. If that first message was given to them, why can't we put ourselves in the right position to be used? Why can't women carry the message?

*Ruby Lee Blanche is a former sharecropper, living with her daughter and three grandchildren in the countryside.*

## Bobbie Ann Blanche

I guess the main reason I'm not resentful is because I know it's partly my fault. It could have been avoided if I'd just been thinking. It's something that I did I'm sorry for because my kids don't have a father. At times it's worse than others because they want to know who is their daddy or where is he, and because he's a married man I can't tell them. So I have to wait till they get older to tell them, well, this man is your daddy but you can't just go out and say it unless he accepts you as his child.

*Bobbie Ann Blanche, raising three children on her own and helping maintain her mother through work as nurses' aide. ●*



*Kerry and Bobbie Blanche, 1973.*



# "What offends one of us won't offend the next chap"

## The Advertising Standards Authority's line on sexism

by Jill Nicholls and Pat Moan

I am alone in the underground waiting for a train. All around me are huge images of female parts: giant rubbery peach tone breasts, wet lips, denim bums, damp-looking stomachs, long legs in high heels ("Hundreds of women take them off for us every day"). I don't know where to look that doesn't make me feel angry or vulnerable. A man comes into the tunnel and looks me up and down. All these ads are like his gang—telling him I am a cunt-thing, a leg-thing, a breast-thing and that I am waiting for him. He is psyched up to think that he has a right to me. (The Lovable bra ad, his hand resting lightly but oh so firmly on her naked waist—his territory).

My mother used to say it was a great relief to her being an old woman because men left her alone. So I am careful to conceal my youth, never to look like those ads. When it is hot I don't wear shorts because it isn't safe: I become a leg-thing. Even in a T-shirt one becomes a tit-thing, ogled, mocked, prodded... Winter means armour of boots, coat, hat and relative safety, but there are no summer clothes behind which to hide your body...

### SEXIST ADS EXPLOIT ALL WOMEN

The Advertising Standards Authority, "editors of our streets" as they see themselves, hotly deny that sexist images are a general representation of women. They don't have anything to do with us, now do they? As they say in their letter rejecting the complaint against Wells "juicy, fruity, fresh and cheap" orange juice ad, it "plainly was not making a statement about women in general, or seeking to suggest to any individual woman who saw the poster that she was required to identify herself with the woman depicted in it".

But even if you don't identify yourself with those ads, men do. Advertising is an incredibly powerful agent of male supremacy, a fact which the ASA glosses over with platitudes like "you have your views and other people have theirs". Of course we have our views but the advertisers have the power and pay a fortune to buy space to push their products. The rest of us are left speechless.

"I stand in the underground station coming to work in the morning with the pictures on the wall of girls in bathing costumes. *Extremely* pretty girls. And I stand there and I enjoy them thoroughly. I come into the office and there's a letter of complaint about the very advertisement that I'd been enjoying",

says Tony Painter, deputy director of the ASA. "That just proves the point that we've all got our own views. What offends one of us won't offend the next chap."

Geoffrey Williams, new boy at the ASA, is sure that a lot of men "really like lascivious advertising". Pushed, he does admit that the use of women in ads reflects their position in society (it may not seem much but it sounded really advanced during our interview in their boardroom!) But the ASA, *not* a government body but the self-policing arm of the advertising industry, financed by a 0.1% surcharge on display advertising, is obsessed with antiquated notions of 'taste and decency' which are totally defined by what they conceive majority views to be, based of course on their own.

The ASA waits for complaints to come in, rather than taking initiatives themselves, though they do pre-vet ads in certain areas—cigarettes and slimming aids for instance. They cover only press and poster advertising—cinema, TV and radio are not their responsibility.

The council of 12 members appointed by the chairman, himself appointed by the advertising industry, considers complaints behind closed doors. They meet once a month to decide on cases prepared for them by a secretariat (nearly 40-strong) which services both the ASA and the Code of Advertising Practice (CAP) Committee, a trade association to which most advertisers and publications belong. The CAP committee writes the code—with its empty call for ads to be "legal, decent, honest and truthful", whatever that means—and the ASA supervises its implementation.

Asked about their criteria on sexism, which fits only under their umbrella of 'decency', Painter said, "Really you're asking me to read the minds of the council and that's very difficult for me to do... They're just like everybody else, you've got a group of 12 ordinary people making these judgements. You get another group of 12 and they might take a different view—it's the name of the game."

Just like everybody else? The ASA boast that two thirds of the council have no connection with advertising and so "our independence is assured by the independence of the members of the council, who have no axe to grind". What's more... "they come from all walks of life" and three are 'ladies'. Yes, there's MPs, company directors, lords, a vicar, even the Baroness of Fulham (just an ordinary housewife?).

They're proud too that their members



### HUNKY, CHUNKY BIG & CRUNCHY

### STUART'S Nutz Are Best

are answerable to no one—"We don't want representatives, we want ordinary people, people who make their own judgements."

In the case of the Wells ad, which received, they say, about 20 complaints, a lot by ASA standards, Painter said: "the majority of the council didn't think that the words could logically apply to the caricature of the woman". One of the arguments was that although the words could apply to the woman, "they could equally well apply to the orange juice"! (Who was talking about logic??)

The fact that the drawing was stylised loomed large for the council—quite why escaped us. They seem to see style and humour as a thing apart from the 'content' or 'meaning' of an ad, which they take clodhoppingly literally. Asked if they'd ever had any complaints about sexual imagery in ads—phallic symbolism, (foaming champagne bottles), masturbation scenes like in the Rothmans ad where the uniformed arm reaches for the gear lever—they looked slightly shocked and said, "No. Well yes. Doubtless from time to time but I can't recall having one. But then I've only been here a short time." Judging by their response to Wells, the chances of such complaints being understood is pretty low. They can spot a nude when they see one and disapprove, but don't delve much deeper—though they do claim to know the difference between feminist objections to the exploitation of women and puritanical revulsion at nudity as such.

Job ads that are overtly sex discriminatory ("Girl Friday wanted") are relatively easy to deal with because they break the law. (Painter points out that Britain's race relations legislation is stronger than that on sex discrimination, which has nothing comparable to the clause about not "inciting to racial hatred".) Ads like those for Green Shield stamps that idealise





This is an ad for a male perfume. Logfire and fur signify luxury (material success). The woman lies at his feet, hair dishevelled, skirt and blouse open, the just-fucked look (his sexual success). Her body is carefully arranged for the viewer (voyeur). The man stares the camera in the eye, challenging yet sure of himself. His hand rests on her — his territory, his possession. Note the wordplay on 'mandate' — he's man, she's date, plus the literal meaning of mandate — he is authorised to do as he wants with her, like a conquering nation over a colony. All the power a man needs. . . .

women as housewives and insist on our role within the family as carers, consumers and dependents, are not illegal...or indecent...they're just sexist, and that doesn't count.

Factual complaints they find easier to deal with (if an ad promises 90% beef when the stuff's made of soya), so we asked about another kind of 'misleading claim'—you'll get a boyfriend if you use this deodorant/cleanser/hair-remover: buy this and he'll buy you.

"The question the council would ask itself is whether a significant number of girls would be silly enough to believe it" says Painter. So if you're influenced you're silly, if you're not it's a bad ad. And how can women *not* be influenced by the messages screamed from all sides?

Though Painter "can't remember" a complaint on grounds of sexism being upheld, writing to the ASA is not an utter waste of time. In the case of Wells, which they insist was "a borderline case", each complaint was passed on to the company and the effect of that is "to deter Wells from using the same ad again", according to Painter. Unless a complaint is considered too "trivial" to pursue, they publish the results of their investigations—for or against—in a monthly report, sent out to consumer agencies and the media—this includes the name of company and product and is considered bad publicity. If an advertiser refuses to change an ad against which a complaint has been upheld, the ASA can ask the media not to accept it. As a last resort it could recommend that the advertiser's trading privileges be withdrawn. In any event they do assume that for every complaint they receive, 100 to 1,000

other people are also offended who didn't bother to write. Diplomatically perhaps, they kept urging us to test the system and see how they handle anti-sexist complaints: "It's difficult to criticise the system if it's not being used isn't it— you ought to try it out."

If everyone who sent a cutting to *Spare Rib's* Tooth and Nail—on average two or three a day—or slapped a sticker on some hideous poster, also dashed off a note to the ASA, they'd be overwhelmed!

However, they are sticky about defining how 'representative' opinions are (ironically, given their own constitution). The code is meant to reflect "the prevailing view of the population of the UK". They ask if an ad will "offend the majority of people who will see it...We may get a dozen complaints about a particular ad or poster and immediately a new question arises: how representative are these complaints?" Sometimes they are prepared to withdraw an ad if a 'minority' is deeply offended—for instance a Smirnoff vodka ad which made a joke about the Titanic (because it upset relatives of those who drowned) and a Japanese car ad which mentioned Hiroshima.

But angry women don't get this special treatment.

## ON THE OFFENSIVE

Affirm is a feminist alliance against ads, articles and images that exploit women. Its aim is, simply, to abolish all sexism in the media. As well as using traditional ways of campaigning—writing

to the ASA and to TV and radio stations, monitoring newspapers and writing letters to the editor—the women involved also try to work out more imaginative methods. They support direct action, sell stickers and badges and are preparing an action kit for the enraged woman! They're willing to speak at schools, colleges and conferences, and plan to hold a conference of their own in the autumn.

Affirm, they feel, has a huge consciousness raising function: "We try to get behind the ads, showing how media images interrelate with a whole ideology. People get used to sexism, they aren't shocked any more. There's a lot of emphasis in ads on the possession of women—this relates to violence against women, because if men can't have the women they're offered, they take."

Affirm meets fortnightly in London and functions as a contact point for individuals around the country. It's eager to form new groups and hear from more women.

We have had reports of individual women dreaming up schemes on their own . . . one woman even thought of sticking pins in Wells plastic orange squash bottles in supermarkets (illegal of course).

If you're caught spraying—or tearing down or subverting posters with stickers—sentences can be heavy. You're treated as any ordinary vandal—political motivation seems to come into it only if used against you! If you *do* get caught, cash in on the publicity. When Diane Potter and Maria Schween were tried in London recently for 'defacing property'—posters for *The Stud* and *Emmanuelle*—crowds of women picketed the court and the story made all the local papers.

Even if the ad-men are dreaming up ways to incorporate our protests—Like the Brook Street ad with leg in plaster cast, complete with empty space just *inviting* passers-by to scrawl a message—graffiti are still one small way of making our voice heard. Any more suggestions? ●

1. ASA/CAP committee, 15-17 Ridgmount St London WC1, (01-580 0801). They're now revising the code (available free from them) of advertising practice and as advertisers do refer to it, it might be worth getting in something about sexism. They welcome submissions.

2. Affirm, c/o Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1. They sell badges — "How dare you presume I'm a stereotype", fluorescent pink and green—at 15p plus SAE and stickers— "This degrades women" and "Offensive to women"—at 1p each (remember to send postage).

3. Worth looking at:

- i) Photography Workshop has a slide bank of photos of women at work plus material on "the construction of womanhood" (advertising images, comics etc). Available from 152 Upper St, London N1.
- ii) Decoding Advertisements by Judith Williamson; Marion Boyars £3.95;
- iii) Ways of Seeing by John Berger; Pelican £1.25.
- iv) Photography by Greenhill, Murray and Spence shows how to photography differently; Macdonald Guidelines £1.



# IMAGES OF SCHOOLGIRLS



## CLASS

"When I used to read these comics, I lived round here in Wandsworth and went to the local primary school. These girls all go to expensive boarding schools. They aren't like normal people; they don't even have a hair out of place!"

"The story in 'The Four Marys' is about a model being blackmailed by a 'Cockney' girl because she grew up in a slum and picked pockets. Being working-class is shown as something to be ashamed of — all the 'Cockneys' are criminals."

"'Weighty Katie' has to lose weight to become the star of the show. It is quite upsetting to be told that fat people can't be a success!"



Lisa Sutton, Abida Hashmi and Linda Sheppey are fourth year students at Mayfield comprehensive school in Wandsworth. As part of their Media Studies CSE course, they have studied the effects of the visual representation of women.

"We looked at a collection of comics and magazines for a single week to see what image they presented of teenage schoolgirls like ourselves. School and education weren't really mentioned in the magazines for teenagers. And the schoolgirls in comics like 'Bunty' and 'Debbie' weren't much like us...."

## Once she knows the facts of life, you should plan her marriage.

Every parent knows how quickly a daughter grows up nowadays. One moment she's playing with her dolls, next she's a 10-year-old knowing far more than you ever did at her age. Before you know where you are, she's a beautiful 20-year-old wanting to get married.

Naturally, you want to give her the reception she deserves. But have you any idea what that can cost nowadays, let alone in 10 years time?

We know 70 people who could help you face the bill—our branch managers. For although our interest rates can alter, just £5 a month at a current rate in a Share Account turns into over £1,000 by the time your 10-year-old reaches her 21st.

Even better, encourage your young daughter to pay a little in herself as she gets older.

So when the time comes for her to set up her own house, she's already known to us as a prudent saver. And as such, she'll have priority with us for a mortgage.

So the first house she's carried over after her wedding could well be her own.

**Cheitnam & Gloucester**

We're interested in you, not just your money.

## FOR ADULTS

"These two pictures come from magazines for adults. The girl looks very neat and innocent, even if she does know 'the facts of life'. She'd probably go to a private or grammar. It might appeal to some fathers' protective feelings."

"My parents, who come from Pakistan, arranged a marriage for my sister. But she refused to marry the man. She said she wanted to decide who she would marry for herself."

"The women dressed as schoolgirls don't look at all innocent! You'd think this picture was aimed at men, but actually it was in 'She' magazine. I don't really understand that."







## The neatest towel won't let anyone know you're having a period

No matter what you wear or what you do there's no reason why anyone need know you're having a period.

Because Kotex Syphs tampons are smaller, neater, fully absorbent towels that never show even under the slimmest clothes.

Syphs always stay securely in place too, because they press on with a double grip-rim. And there are no embarrassing disposal problems either as Syphs flush away completely in one go.

So if you want to carry on as normal every day of the month, the answer is the neatest one.

For a free trial pack of three write to: Mary Abbott, Dept. N2, Kimberly-Clark, United, Ltd., Kent.



Lil-lets by Dr. White's.

## new Strip Wax

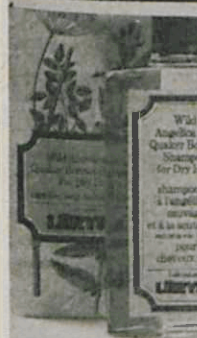
The easiest and fastest way to remove unwanted hair from your face and body.

No mess, no fuss, just press on and peel off!

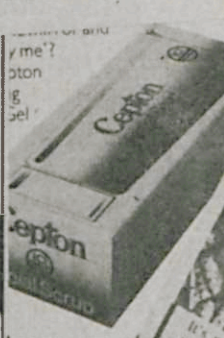
Away comes hair completely, including roots, in just ten seconds. £1.95

Available from chemists and stores.

Louis Marcell Ltd., 12 Beasley Street, Windsor, Berks.



Don't usually that gently removed. Natural oils are sealed with organic substances to restore body and sheen.



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What they didn't tell you about being a woman.

You're well on the way to being a woman. Having periods really is the proof of that. But no one told you that periods can be painful. And when they are they make you miserable and irritable.

STOP FEMININ ITCHIN'

At last there's a remedy for feminine itching - it's Lanacane Cream Medication. Lanacane gives you fast, long-lasting relief from sensitive, embarrassing itching you can experience at any time of the month.

It works because it soothes the irritation. So your tight pants don't chafe and start the itching all over again.

Then the active ingredient of Lanacane checks bacteria growth and so speeds up the healing of the skin. And it's so pleasant to use. It doesn't sting, it's pleasant and nicely scented, and it doesn't stain your clothes.

Stop your feminine itching now use Lanacane Cream Medication. Available at your chemist.

LANACANE

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## UGLY SPOTS

There's nothing more upsetting than seeing ugly spots when you look in the mirror. No amount of covering up can hide them.

The answer is to get rid of them. DDD modern antiseptic lotion quickly gets to grips with skin germs that can cause spots. At night just wash your face and deb the spots with cotton wool well soaked with DDD antiseptic lotion. Leave it to do its work overnight, and your spots will soon start to dry up.

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here enjoy the summer fun

you are too thin. Super Wats-

elp you put on pounds to help

a more feminine figure. Super

can help fill out curves on

s, bust, arms, legs and hips.

er Wats-On contains body

calories for energy and

B1, B2, B12 and D2

of health - feel prettier.

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Cool helper for it

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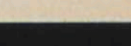
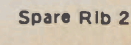
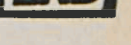
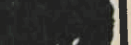
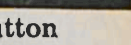
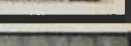
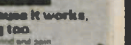
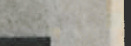
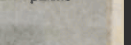
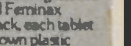
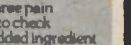
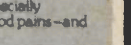
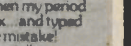
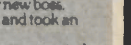
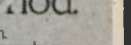
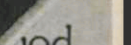
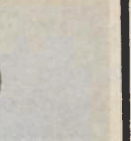
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## TEENAGE FEARS & FANTASIES...& US

"When we looked at the advertisements in Jackie, Pink, OK and 19, we found that most of them were for things to get rid of spots, hair on your legs or face, dandruff and split ends, warts, period pains, nail biting, and so on. Others were for make-up, perfume and clothes. All of them seemed to suggest that you have to buy things if you want to be attractive."

"But that's not what it says in the stories....."



Abida Hashmi



Linda Sheppey



Lisa Sutton





# SHORTLIST

WRITE TO RUTH WALLSGROVE  
27 CLERKENWELL CLOSE  
LONDON EC1

If you want something to go into Shortlist could you please keep it short, remember to put the full address of the place (and postal district if it's in London), and send it in writing, by June 29 for the next issue - telephone messages half an hour before we go to the printers are no fun!

## MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

If you are organising or going to a conference, could you pick up, or write to us for, copies of Spare Rib to sell and distribute there?

### Women and Work

At Women's Research and Resources Centre, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Feminist History Group.

23 June. 7.30. Robyn Dasey will talk on *Factory Women in late 19th century Hamburg*.

7 July. Rose Glickman will talk on *Russian Women Factory Workers 1880-1914*. To be confirmed - ring Anna Davin 01-703 5275.

### 2nd London Area Women's Liberation Conference

24/25 June at City University, Northampton Square, London EC1. If you have any ideas for workshops etc. and/or want to be involved in organising the conference write to the Planning Group c/o A Woman's Place, 42 Earlham St, London WC2. Details and registration forms from Planning Group. Up-to-date information will be in London Women's Liberation Newsletter (available from A Woman's Place). Registration £1.50.

### Liberty, Equality, Sisterhood

28 June - 13 July. 11am to 6 pm at Whitechapel Art Gallery, Whitechapel High St, London E1. A historical exhibition on the vote and the women's movement in Britain, organised by the Fawcett Library. Closed Mondays.

### Reclaim Women's Past - Sponsored Walk

9 July. Starting 10 am Newington Green, Newington Green Road, London N16. A women only walk round landmarks in feminist history to raise money for Rights of Women, and to have fun! Transport is provided for children. There'll be a picnic in a park en route. Everyone will get a map and explanatory leaflet giving a lively picture of what was going on when, where and why. 50 years of the vote and the Women's Army is still marching! If you can't come, please be a sponsor. For further information, and sponsorship forms, contact ROW, 2 St Paul's Road, London N1 (01-359 6656)

### Prostitution in Kenya

30 June. 7.30 prompt. At WRR, as above. Seminar by Janet Bujra.

### South West Regional Women's Liberation Conference

1/2 July. At Virginia House, Palace St, Plymouth. Contact Plymouth WL Group at 52 Dale Rd, Mutley, Plymouth if creche or accommodation required. Ideas for workshops welcome.

### Self Help Therapy Conference

14 to 21 July. At Laurieston Hall, Castle Douglas, Kircudbrightshire, Scotland. A week for people who have started or would like to start self help therapy groups. Proposed structure: therapy sessions in the mornings, relaxing, gardening, massage, discussions etc. in afternoons, small support groups, therapy sessions in evenings. Details from Catriona at Laurieston Hall - send s.a.e.

### Co-counsellors Camp

19-25 July. For experienced co-counsellors, to explore different aspects of the theme 'Taking control of our lives'. Accommodation will be in tents - bring your own. Cost about £18 including food. Booking is essential as there will only be 30 places. Please send s.a.e. for more information to Chris, c/o Crabapple, 16 St Mary's St. Shrewsbury.

### Scottish Radical Feminist Camp

Ideas are brewing for a conference/camp sometime this summer, to come together to discuss radical feminist theory, strategy and action, plans for better communication in Scotland, developments in the Women's Liberation Movement, having fun etc. Most popular idea is to have it in the country. Please send ideas/comments and guesses of how many women are interested to Alison Buckley, 4 Fleming Place, St Andrews, Fife.



## CAMPAIGNS CENTRES

### Women's Health Centre Campaign

A group of Islington women have started a campaign to get an independent women's health centre in the area - to provide advice for individual women, campaign for women's health needs to be met in the NHS, and to bring together activities and resources, eg self-help, information. "We need women to join us and to share their experience and expertise, and groups to support the campaign." Contact Clare 358 7814 or write c/o 90c Petherton Road, London N5.

"Feminists and socialists who want to build a militant campaign against all aspects of commercial advertising contact Vic, 01-699 1464."

## FUN AND MUSIC

### Islington Women's Aid Benefit

30 June. 8pm, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5. Women's band and disco, and bar. Money raised will go towards sending 3 women to an International Women's Aid Conference. £1, claimants 50p.

### Young Vic Summer Festival - Women's Music

12-15 July. At Young Vic, 66 The Cut, London SE1 (928 6363). Among those performing as part of the Festival will be Adelphi String Quartet, Frankie Armstrong, Feminist Improvisation Group, Jam Today, Bettina Jonic, Ova. Tickets £1. Workshops by Frankie, and Maggie Nicholls, tickets 50p.

"Sisters in London - please keep evening of 15 July Free for Fun. Details of the events will follow later. Haringey's Women's Group."

### Women and Music Newsletter

19 August. 2pm at Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1. "We want to set up a national women and music newsletter - come along if you would like to be part of the collective, or if you have any ideas for what you would like to see in it." Further details from Rosie, 312a Westbourne Park Rd, London W11, or call Alison/Terry 01-485 2799.

### Liberty Hall

At the Everyman Bistro, Hope St, Liverpool, every Sunday at 8pm, prompt. This is an alternative to commercial clubs which puts on events in an informal social atmosphere. Events are followed by a disco. Usually costs members 25p, non-members 40p. Of special interest to women -

2 July. Experiences of childcare. Discussion started by three local people on their own situations.

10 September. Gay Sweatshop Women's Collective presents *What the Hell is She Doing Here?*

8 October. Women and Ireland discussion.

15 October. Feminist Improvisation Group.

29 October. Frankie Armstrong, Jan Hammerlund, and a film of Malvena Reynolds, 40p, non-members 60p.

### Women's Arts Alliance

"The overworked and under-recognised collective of WAA has resigned. Many thanks to them all. A new collective has formed, needing lots of support and rota workers to make sufficient use of the space. So book your meetings, workshops, theatre and music events, films and exhibitions now! We're expanding our stock of books and records, and a little cafe has started. We're open 2-10pm weekdays, 2-6 weekends unless there are events. By the way, we had no luck with the Arts Council Grant. Thanks to the women who supported us. Money situation is desperate and so is time. We would be flabbergasted by donations!" WAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1 (01-935 1841)

### Rape Crisis Centre in Tel Aviv

This has opened to give immediate help to rape victims, with volunteers on hand 24 hrs a day. And "Visiting feminists are always welcome to use our library, coffee-corner and other facilities at the Feminist Centre, 288 Dizengoff St, Tel Aviv, Israel (01-220420)"

## ART

### Women Artists' Slide Library

A new group that has set up a slide library as an information service for and about women artists. "We desperately need premises in a women's building, and new members to help us run a library. If you can help please write to the Women Artists Slide Library, Annie Wright c/o Spare Rib."

### Women and the Visual Arts Newsletter

A new quarterly newsletter. The first, to be produced in York, will contain personal accounts by women artists, info on events and exhibitions, and reading lists. Please send info, articles, ideas, donations/stamps to Katherine Hamer c/o WIRES, 32a Parliament St, York, (0904 35471)



## Pen Dalton

3-29 July. At Women's Arts Alliance, as above. *Framework*, an exhibition of paintings on the limits and constraints of patriarchy.

## Laurieston Hall Women's Arts Festival

11-18 August. At Laurieston Hall, as above. Four days of films, theatre, dance, music, video, visual and performance arts etc. including Clap-perclaw, Pirate Jenny, Roadgang. Then 3 days for workshops, discussions, impromptu events and enjoying ourselves. Women only, except for events during the day over the first four days. Book in advance. For further details write enclosing sae to Laurieston Women's Arts Festival, Laurieston Hall.

## PROJETS

## Feminist EFL Teachers

English-as-a-Foreign-Language teachers living and working in different countries are organising to exchange information and ideas – and to combat sexism in teaching material and provide alternatives. They would like, eventually, to set up a workshop to produce non-sexist material for publication. Please contact, and send any contributions for a newsletter to, Jean Meyer, CLM, Via A Pozzo 30, 38100 Trento, Italy

## Abortion in Brighton

Brighton NAC are trying to find out how easy or otherwise it is to get an abortion in Brighton as part of their efforts to get a day care unit set up. Women who have ever asked a doctor in the area for an abortion are asked to fill in a confidential questionnaire, available from 57a Preston St, Brighton

## National Gay Switchboard Association

This was proposed at the 4th Gay Switchboards Conference, to arrange national fundraising, set up new switchboards, establishment of guidelines for operating them and exchange of information. Further info can be obtained from Bristol Gay Switchboard, 0272 712621

## Grapevine

A BBC 2 series on self-help schemes, eg housing co-ops, one-parent family projects, community art schemes. They say that most of the subjects covered were suggested by viewers, and want to hear from anyone who knows about or is in such a scheme, or has any ideas or comments. It could be an opportunity to get some feminism on TV. Write to Grapevine, BBC TV, London W12 8QT

## Production Engineering

Brunei University is offering incentives worth £2,600 each to women applicants to study this, to end 'excessive male dominance' of the course. The course starts in September; applicants need two A levels, in maths and a physical science. Contact Brunei University, Kingston Lane, Hillingdon

## PLAYERS IN FILMS

## The Hourglass

Theatre of Thelema performs their trilogy exploring women and time, a political alchemy. . . "the crumbling of Mans Palace, whose death pangs threaten the very continuation of Earth." £1. students 50p.  
28 June. 8pm, Waterside Theatre, Rotherhithe St, London SE16.  
29 June. 8pm, Tramshed, Woolwich New Rd, London SE18  
30 June. 8pm, Jacksons Lane Community Centre, 271 Archway Rd, London N6  
1 July. 8pm, St Martins Church Hall, Vicars Rd, London NW5  
2 July. 8pm, Half Moon, Alie St, London E1 (£1.75p students, 50p claimants)  
3-4 July. 8pm, National Poetry Centre, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5.  
9 July. 8pm. Cockpit Theatre Gateforth St, London NW8.

## Tissue

25 July-12 August. 1.15pm at ICA Theatre, Nash House, The Mall, London SW1 (01-930 6393) A play by Louise Page about the emotional responses of a woman following a mastectomy operation . . . and the reactions of her friends. Directed by Nancy Duiguid.



## Edinburgh Film Festival

This includes a conference on Feminism and the Cinema, 21-26 August. With seminars, screenings, forums aimed at assessing developments in feminist film making and theory. Information from Department M, Edinburgh International Film Festival, The Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh. (031-225 1671)

## What the Hell is She Doing Here?

Gay Sweatshop (women's company) show with music.  
22 June. Thursday to Sunday till July 2. Drill Hall, Chenies St, London WC1. Fridays and Saturdays – extraordinary evenings with women's bands. Details from 01-226 6143  
20 June. 7.30. Keele University, Keele.

27 June. 12.45pm. Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Barbican, London  
6 July. North London Poly, Prince of Wales Drive, London NW5 During *Marxism* '78  
7 July. Brillig Arts Centre, Bath  
8 July. Plymouth Arts Centre  
12 July. Middlesex Poly  
13-15 July. Bristol Folk House, during a week of gay events.

## Jingleball

5-8 July. Oval House, 54 Kennington Oval, London SE11. The return of Gay Sweatshop's feminist panto (out of season!) during Gay Pride Week 1978

## PUBLICATIONS

## Black/Brown Women's Liberation Newsletter

"A few of us are committed to attacking the white-supremacist attitudes and ignorance of white sisters, as well as asserting our existence inside and outside the Women's Liberation Movement. We hope to come together and provide a supportive network for each other around the country. We are also going to create our own space for what we have to say." Contributions are invited from brown and black sisters (Asian, African, West Indian, Latin American, Oriental) for a national newsletter. Offers of help will be gladly received. Subs will probably be £1 for 4 issues, and the newsletter will be available to all women only. Contributions from black women only, though financial assistance from white sisters will be appreciated! Write to Shaila at 43 Grosvenor Terrace, Bootham, York.

## History Workshop Journal

In No 5, now out, the main article is "Imperialism and Motherhood" by Anna Davin. Price £3, or two issues £5. From History Workshop Journal, PO Box 69, Oxford OX2 7XA

## Why Children?

The Women's Press Ltd would like to hear from women who have made a positive decision to have – or not to have – children, and would be interested in contributing an article to this forthcoming book. Please write outlining your views in brief and enclosing sae to 12 Ellesmere Rd, London E3 5QX

## Effe

*Effe*, the monthly Italian feminist magazine, is trying to build up a feminist library. "We will be happy to receive a copy from anyone who writes pamphlets, magazines, books, poetry." Please send to Effe, Piazza Campo Marzio 7, Roma, Italy

## Just Books

A small collective who are opening an alternative bookshop-centre in Belfast in late June. There will be books, pamphlets, posters on feminism, libertarianism, gay issues, children's literature etc, and exhibition space, food and a library. However . . . this is costing more than the collective have got, so if you can help in any way, financial or otherwise, please contact Just-Books, 7 Winetavern St, Belfast.

## Belfast Women's Collective

They are putting out a bimonthly paper *Women's Action*, with news of all kinds of feminist actions in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. It's available from them c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast, BT 12

## WICCA

"Women in all parts of Ireland, or all ages, in all spheres of life . . . this magazine is for you. We want to publish your poetry, prose, drawings, photos, book reviews, non-sexist children's stories, thoughts on the Irish institutions that affect your life . . . in fact, anything that you're interested in . . ." So starts the editorial in the first issue of Ireland's new feminist monthly *Wicca*. Women in Ireland have felt the loss of *Banshee* acutely and so it's great to see the first copy of *Wicca* – 24 easy to read pages of reviews, news reports, listings of where to buy your contraceptives, womens centres and some very good articles. Copies can be obtained by subscribing – £2.70 for one year, or 15p single copy plus sae. Cheques/postal orders to *Wicca* c/o Wendy Wells, 21 Corsthaite Park West, Dun Laoghaire. Co. Dublin, Eire.

Carole Spedding

## Red Therapy

Well worth reading for those interested in issues of politics and therapy; there's general discussion, advice on starting self-help groups, useful addresses and books, a guide to different kinds of therapy and an attempt to put mental health in a socio-political context. This context is better worked out in relation to capitalism than to sexism; however there is a lot in the pamphlet specifically by and about women. The accounts of the history and problems of Red Therapy's leaderless groups are readable and honest. 70p.\*

Stef Pixner

## Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Women's Special Issue

What has women's liberation to do with socialist revolution? (and what has socialism to do with Russia?) If you've ever argued about it, at last there's an excellent basis for discussion. This is a really detailed survey that falls for none of the Cold War clichés (on either side) and focusses on the realities of women's lives – housework, (under-) paid employment, birth control, sexuality, male violence, housing, food prices, how state policy and economic priority combine to reinforce a traditional family. Moving accounts of and by dissident women, including signatories of a ground-breaking Hungarian petition against new restrictive abortion laws; patriarchy inside the dissident movement don't escape criticism either. Some nice satirical graphics, film and book reviews, useful booklist – the pamphlet could make a good teaching aid or exhibition material. 30p\*. There's a *Women in Eastern Europe* newsletter too, which welcomes new contributors.

Amanda Sebestyen

\*Indicates publications are available from the Publications Distribution Co-op, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.



# THE FUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

(the continuing moving story of the struggle against Poverty of Humour in the Women's Movement.)



overstatement

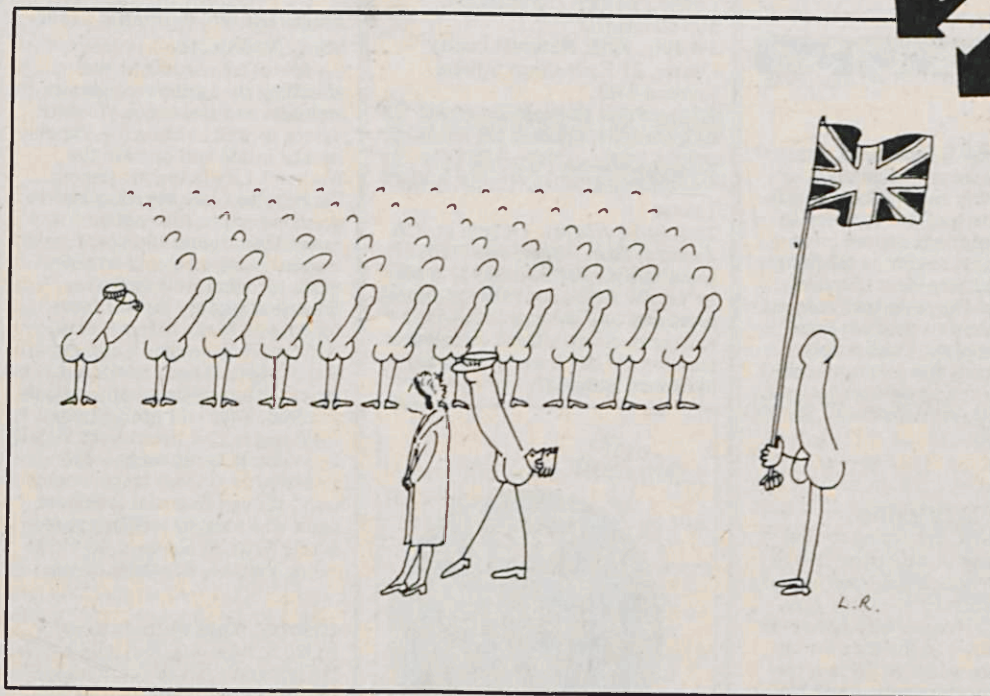


understatement

## 1. Symbols of Power

Rule Britannia  
Britannia Waves  
the Rules

God save  
the Queen



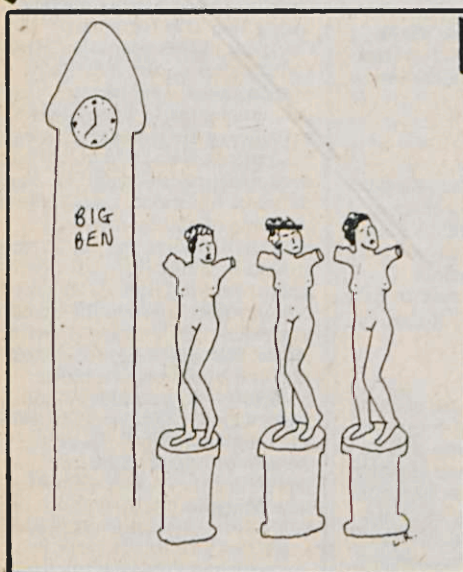
attack  
expose

RIDDLE: a queen for 25 years, a woman for even longer, and so white..... who is she?

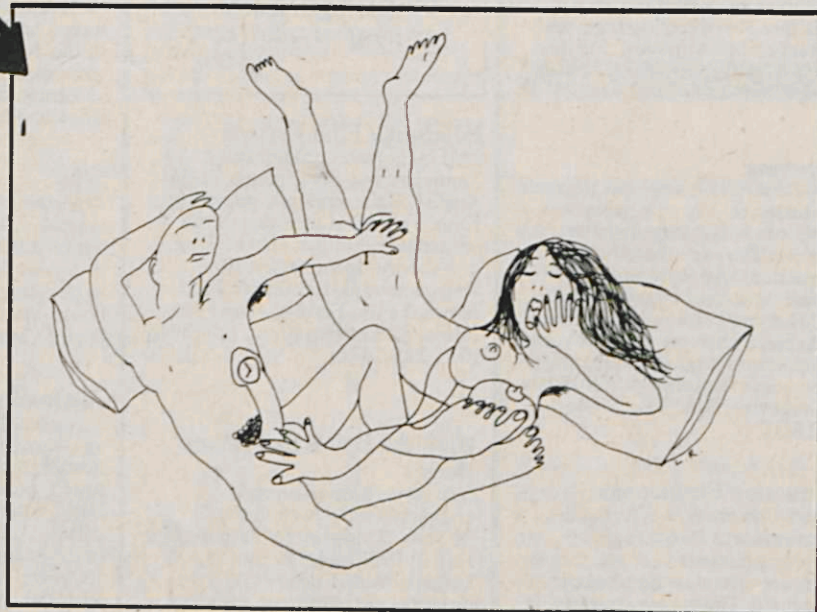
..... and since we're talking of TIME, SIZE, PLACE, and MYTHS.....

Why God, and  
why the queen?

attack



expose  
expose

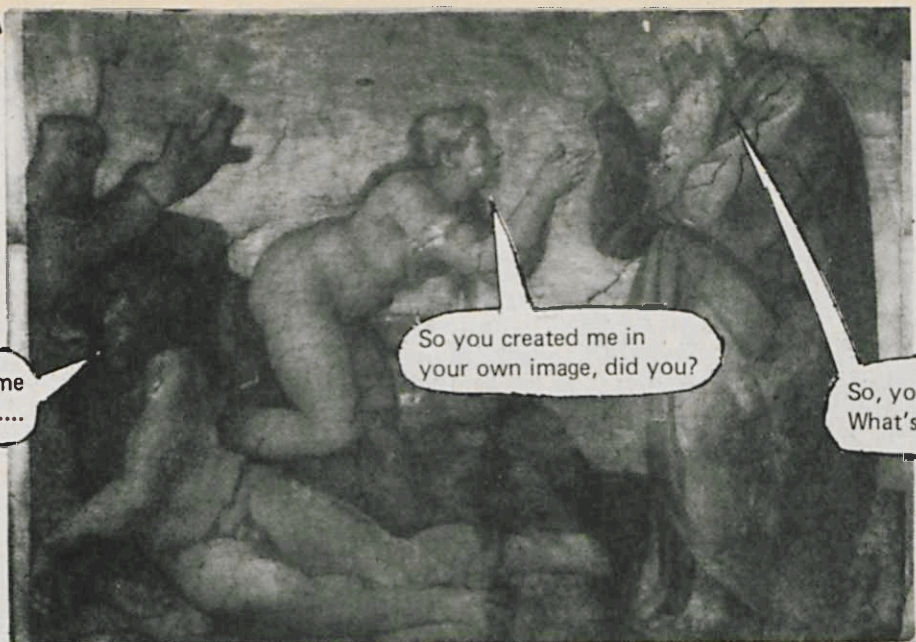


"'armless? We're a high risk male rape fantasy!'"

"At the next stroke it will be 8 inches and 20 seconds precisely....."



expose

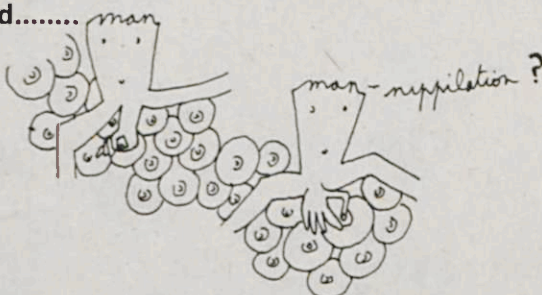
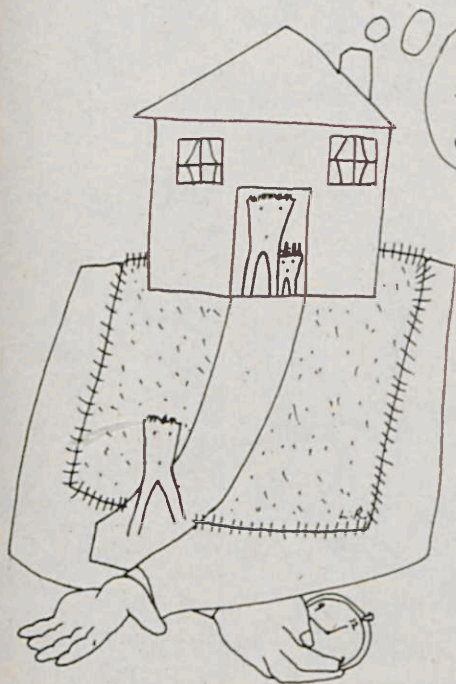


zzzzz..... hope he fixes me up with a nice bloke .....

So you created me in your own image, did you?

So, you got patriarchy. What's wrong with that?

.....where would we be without CAPITALISM..... and.....



expose

# bio-logics: lesson 1

men and women are people like Everybody Else.

a woman has a cunt, uterus.

a man has a prick, phallus.

This makes fucking or intercourse possible.

Babies can start in a woman from intercourse.

But pregnancy is not simply a woman's Natural Instinct.



make relations less invisible

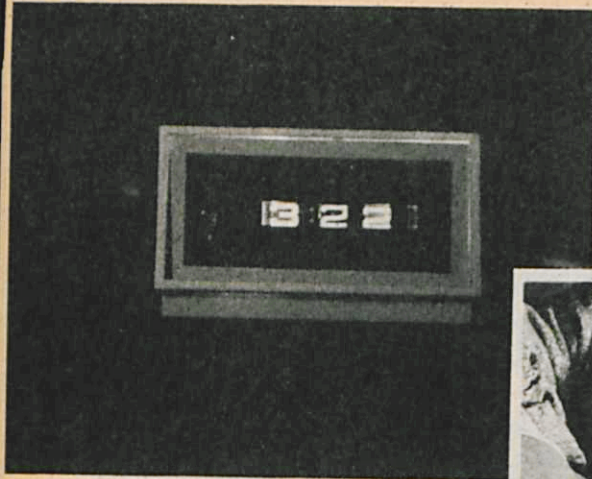
struggle starts here

..not the end!



# A day in the life

## STARTS HERE ▶



1. Zebedee wakes 2 or 3 times a night at least.

## MORNING

2. Breast feeding about 7am. Zebedee still breast feeds at night and first thing in the morning▶



3. Christine in the kitchen—about 8.30am. Christine lives upstairs. We share the kitchen. She teaches, does freelance illustration and is a good friend. After Zebedee arrived, I sometimes got a bit frantic trying to keep the kitchen as tidy as before because I didn't want to inconvenience her, but she wasn't inconvenienced. Sharing a house in this way was important to me before having Zebedee, but has become even more so since. I would have felt isolated, often lonely and sometimes frightened this year if I'd been living entirely on my own.▶



Photos by Michael Ann Mullen and Christine Roche



4. Nappy change and dress — about 9.00am.



5. Dishes everyday. (Laundry and other housework some days)



6. My desk accuses me when I look at it — so much undone piling up. Sometimes I do desk work during Zebedee's morning nap. Usually its not done until desperate, and at night.



7. Sometimes we go to the supermarket. Often Zebedee's asleep when we do, so I drag him around in his carrycot and push a basket. Up until recently, he was too little to sit on the seat in the basket without falling over sideways so I propped him up with loo rolls either side.



8. Sometimes we go on a job to take pictures. When he was very small, I arrived early, fed him in the car and arrived at the job with him asleep in his Easy Rider on my front. Later, he came in his carrycot. Now he's more active and I leave him at home if at all possible though it means getting someone to come to look after him or leaving him with a friend.

## AFTERNOON

9. We're always rushing at lunchtime. . . . ▶





When I read other people's 'days in the life ...' I always wanted to see what 'they look like so here we are. ▶



15. I belong to the Hackney Flashers, a group of socialist feminist photographers, illustrators and designers who meet here Tuesday evenings. We've been together for three years and are now working on an exhibition on women and childcare. At the moment, I find it difficult to concentrate on all my commitments and this kind of work tends to get neglected.



14. Lucia leaves at 5.30 and then I give Zebedee his bath and dinner and we play if there's time.

## EVENING

13. Michael, Zebedee's father and a good friend, comes to visit sometimes. He, with his two other children and some friends live and work on a farm. We would like to live closer to one another but it seems impossible at the moment. ▶

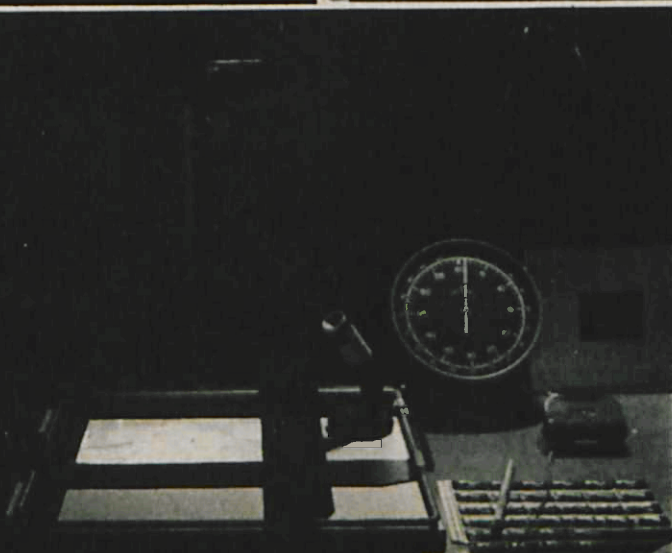


12. On Thursdays Maggie, and Sally and Richard, three photographer friends with children, and Wendy, another working mother, takes turns looking after our four children. Two Thursdays in four each of us is free to work. The children like being together and are getting used to the consistent concern of other adults outside their own homes. ◀



11. At first I found it difficult to watch Lucia and Zebedee go off. It would have been much easier to have shared his care with a lover or friend. Now Lucia has become a friend.

10. ... because Lucia comes at 1.45. Lucia answered a notice I put at a local newsagent for a regular babysitter. She looks after Zebedee four afternoons a week while I work.





# Dedicated to the unknown artist

Feminist artists are working in any number of ways from up-front poster art, to thoroughly researched documentary exhibitions, to avant-garde art practice which is where Susan Hiller's work belongs. She was trained as an anthropologist but in the mid 1960s began working as an artist. She pursues her initial fascination for objects like seaside post-cards, fragments of Pueblo Indian women's pottery, photos from automatic machines, analyses them and classifies them. She wants to bring out the cultural meanings hidden within the images, to raise questions about ways of seeing and ordering experience in a patriarchal society. In April three exhibitions of her work opened in Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Interview by Rozsika Parker



Susan Hiller working on her most recent piece, "Fragments".

*During April three exhibitions of your work opened in relatively conventional galleries, yet you are highly critical of the 'Art World' structure.*

I would say that my using the gallery context at the moment is strategic. I am trying to insert a kind of world view smack into the middle of patriarchal notions of what art is. When I was younger I experienced real difficulty in placing my work within this very hostile structure, but at a certain point you have to face up to the necessities. If you want to communicate you are impelled to insert your work into the art of your time. I think you have a responsibility towards your work, and it's a heavy burden to have it sitting around unseen by everyone but a few friends. Once you've been working for a fair period, once you feel fairly confident about your work, you have to make a decision about what to do with it. The decision to place your work within the contemporary art context causes incredible stress. I don't know any women artists who are not stressed.

*I can understand that putting your work up for public judgement would be stressful, but why is it particularly acute for women?*

Well, your work won't be seen properly, it won't be seen clearly. And no matter how much validation I receive from the mainstream, I can only see my presence within it as intrusive. And the difficulties that I get into are, I believe, the difficulties of communication and language based on a totally different perception of the world.

*I'd agree that the way people see your work is indelibly coloured by the fact you are a woman, but how does your experience as a woman — your perception of the world — affect your relationship to the male art establishment?*

Take for example the arts grant aiding committee that you and I

served on. It had initially been all male but gradually over the years more and more women were invited to serve as members. As soon as there were several women on that panel the language of discussion changed from being the formal and strategic language of the committee room to being a language of feeling and a language of confrontation. Rows broke out that had formerly seethed unmentioned, and those rows were about absolutely basic issues concerning the whole problem of grant aiding the arts. But they had not been made explicit in all those years of funding the arts in this country. Who made them explicit? The women on the panel.

*Don't you think that happened because we were already politicised rather than because we were women?*

No. Look, recently there's been a lot of trouble because there are not enough women teaching in art colleges and the students are finally getting to the point where they are demanding that more women be hired. In a staff meeting at the college where I teach I said that this request of the students should be listened to, I think it's important because I respect the students, not just because that specific demand might be in my interest. A male member of the staff stood up after me and said he totally agreed with everything I said, he thought we should have at least 50% women teaching at the college and ended up by saying "Of course that would mean the end of art education as we know it." He's absolutely right. (laughter)

*But surely a lot of art administrators, people running galleries and so on, are women and they change nothing.*

Because administrators who are not feminists are often people who fit themselves into the male structure. They can therefore only give credibility to the existing value system. But this is really





Examples of Rough Sea postcards from Susan Hiller's work "Dedicated to the Unknown Artist".

so complicated we could talk about it for the entire interview.... I'm speaking about aspects of our conditioning which when made conscious can be a constructive force in your life, but unconscious can be pretty damned destructive.

*What do you mean?*

You see a woman is mute, right?

No....

A woman is mute within our culture in that when she speaks she speaks as a man. This is a point I think Cora Kaplan made brilliantly about the first person in poetry. Women poets come up against important difficulties when they get outside the area of expressing personal feelings. When they try to speak as I-the-poet-speaking-for-humanity, a false note often enters their work and one feels a kind of inauthenticity. This is a problem we all face. For example, you may speak well in public, but is it really you? You can seem articulate and feel alienated. You have to suppress your alienation in order to remain articulate.

*And that becomes personally destructive ....*

Exactly. When I was talking at Cambridge about the work I showed there, the only hostile member of the discussion was a woman art historian whose speciality was the Renaissance. She attacked me because she said I was calling into doubt ideas about art that she held dear. I was saying that soup ladles were as important as Rembrandts and she didn't think soup ladles were as important as Rembrandts. I replied that in terms of personal meanings to her Rembrandt's work might be more important than soup ladles, but in terms of telling us things about ourselves, soup ladles were just as important. Then she did a sudden about face, she looked as though she was going to cry. I could see some sort of pressure building up inside and she started to mumble. The mumbling, all the

inarticulate stuff, was what she really thought. Suddenly she said, "You're absolutely right, soup ladles are important," and dashed out of the room. I never saw her again. One of the reasons she was able to be initially articulate was that she was dealing with the accepted frameworks and categories. It's when we try to deal with the contradictions arising from our experience within these frameworks that we have no language.

So one of the reasons why I think some women arts administrators — who aren't feminists — are hostile to women artists without recognising their own hostility is that they resent the fact that there are at least a few women around who are attempting to speak and to create a language in which they feel at home.

*How does your work challenge conventional ways of seeing reality?*

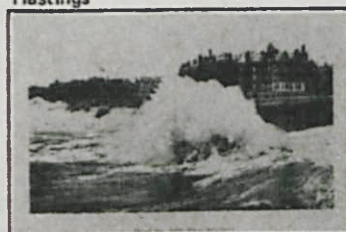
In the three shows on in April, the components of the works are cultural artifacts.... post-cards, fragments of pottery, photographs from automatic machines and clippings from popular encyclopaedias. Now conventional art materials (canvas, paint) are mute, it's only when work is put into them in terms of presentation and analysis that they say anything. So by extension what I'm trying to do in my recent work is to make articulate that which is inarticulate. I'm interested in these cultural materials for the unspoken assumptions they convey.

*Could you describe a work.*

Take "Enquiries/Inquiries". I present a series of slides which are photographs



Hastings



Blackpool



Hastings White Rock



Scarborough



Hillsboro Beach Ilfracombe



Brighton



Torquay

of texts taken from popular encyclopaedias, one British and one American. They purport to give information about questions of fact and what first intrigued me was that they gave this data in the form of a catechism, in other words the questions are rigidly followed by the correct answers. That indicated to me that there was some effort towards imprinting these notions indelibly on the mind. And I discovered by looking at the sets that they carried inbuilt assumptions which are extremely curious. After a while just observing the repetition of certain ways of asking questions indicates that there is a very rigid mental set involved. As an American I feel personally embarrassed by the details of the American set, but I understand that the British set can be just as excruciating. It has a great deal of hierarchical thinking built into it. But both cultures share the same symptom — the lived experience of a person is cut off by a kind of verbal formulation of that experience.

*Did you make the piece from an awareness that as a woman you are negatively positioned in culture by language?*

When I wrote about the piece I said that to examine the givens of a culture implies to some extent that you are separated from it. Now I didn't say that I am separated from the language of my culture *because* I am a woman. I don't want to make those kind of statements, I want the art to speak. I don't want to label it — here is the work of a feminist artist. That notion has been very much degraded; to call people feminist artists ▶



is to box them off into an area which cannot insert itself, cannot contradict mainstream notions of art. Feminists are shunted off to a little side-track called "Feminist Art".

*And it's characterised as being utterly unconcerned with notions of what art is and only concerned with making strong, direct statements about the position of women in our culture. In fact I'm not sure that work such as yours which examines language, social structures and art forms would be stamped as "Feminist Art".*

I think there are radical implications in a more subtle form of intervention. By, for example, looking at notions of sexuality in a popular image to expose our underlying cultural assumptions.

*Let's talk about your piece called "Dedicated to the Unknown Artist" in which you collected and presented hundreds of seaside postcards, all titled Rough Sea.*

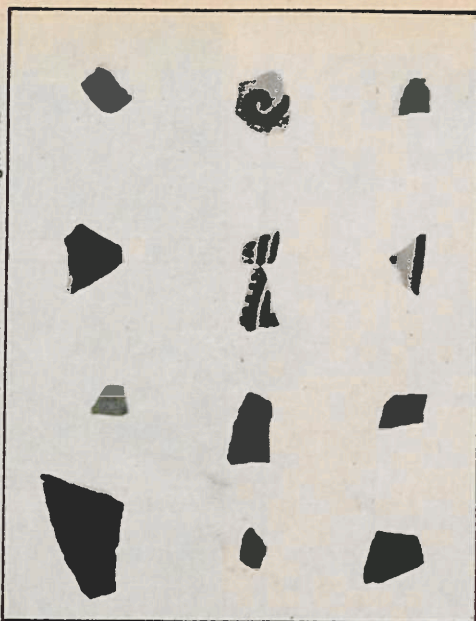
What they are saying is paradoxical and contradictory as I believe our notions are. In most cases the images show a turbulent sea encroaching or threatening human structures, and we get the impression of nature as threatening, wild and terribly thrilling. Some of the postcards show people standing like voyeurs watching some sexual act — watching the waves crashing towards them. I include a quote from Marie Corelli (best-selling Victorian novelist) in which she speaks of "earth the beautiful and her lover the sea" because her images of the sea are tempestuous and sexy and male. Yet normally the sea is referred to as female.

*But natural disasters like hurricanes are called female, maybe a rough sea viewed from the shore is characterised as male because it's seen as powerful rather than uncontrollable and destructive.*

We attribute characteristics to the sea or the land depending on whether we value them positively or negatively. And so you have a number of terms colliding in supposedly ordinary seaside postcards. If you were an anthropologist dealing with another culture you would pick up on the pattern of gestures, artifacts, eating — you would try to make a coherence out of it — but we are so demented with our own culture that we simply discard these manifestations of our own complexity, perplexity and conflicts. And we dismiss them as only postcards.

My conviction is that popular formats may well be art. A postcard is after all a miniature picture. In some of the postcards where the original image is photographic, hand tinting has been added. We tend to think of this sort of thing as a mechanical process, but by comparing several examples based on one initial image, it is easy to see that each painter painted the image completely differently. Aspects of imagination, fantasy or whatever enter the process inevitably. Human beings are not machines; they express their creativity in their gestures, in their ordinary, mundane working gestures. And it's

Pueblo Indian women's pottery shards in "Fragments"



those sort of things I am trying to bring out in that piece.

*A lot of male artists work with discarded fragments of every day life. Do you think your work differs from theirs?*

Yes, they usually make new wholes out of fragments. They don't see their work at all as I see mine. They see it as sculpture. I present the idiosyncratic nature of each individual unit as a sign. Without being sentimental, I think it's a kind of cherishing of things as they are, rather than trying to make them into other things. I deal with fragments of everyday life, and I'm suggesting that a fragmented view of the world is all we've got. Take that high chair over there, we only see it now and for a short time, we're not seeing its entire history.

*As women we have a particularly fragmented view of the history of our art. Do you think that has affected your ideas about the role of the artist?*

Yes. I've always been interested in investigating the origins of ideas and images, and my assumption is that they are collective and not individual. I worked from 1968-74 with other people in various kinds of group structures to allow people to see for themselves that this was so. Perhaps as a woman I had to make explicit the notion that the ideas I had were not idiosyncratic — in a sense I was forced into that position in order to enable me to feel strong enough to state them.

*You no longer work collectively but always make it clear how your work depends on other people's, whether it is the postcard artists or the Pueblo Indian women potters whose shards you work with in "Fragments". You point out that the Pueblo women say they draw inspiration from their art history, from a tradition of pottery making handed down for over two thousand years from mother to daughter, as well as basing their painted pots on designs that they have dreamed at night. Are you saying our culture makes too rigid a distinction between rational and irrational thought?*

Yes, our culture more than most makes a distinction between the rational and irrational, between empiricism and intuitive ways of apprehending the world. In my experience those kinds of distinctions don't have any validity. In my work I'm trying to approach a kind of reconciliation of rational and irrational factors which seems to me a lived truth for many people — particularly for women. For myself, speaking as a woman, I can say that this is part of the way that I see things.

*It is true that a comparatively large number of women became involved in Surrealism which as an art movement aimed to unite the rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious, and which supported the notion of the artist as medium rather than a domineering, ordering force.*

It has been argued that the subjugation of women has strengthened certain faculties because in order to survive women had had to develop resources to judge the nature of people and situations. Our culture, however, has laid great stress on the development of rational, thinking faculties in people and dismissed or minimised the irrational, calling these qualities feminine, negating them, calling them *extra-sensory* perception.

*Except when male artists draw on irrational mode of thought or dreams and then it's termed inspiration provided by The Muse — the female, silent, representative of the unconscious and the dream.*

Yet there are numerous instances in the history of science of great insights coming to people in a way that our culture dismisses. In other words when you study the history of science, you study it as a history of empiricism, experimentation and the formulation of hypotheses, but in fact so many important insights of science have come through what are called irrational means that we have to conclude that the way science describes itself is not value free.

Our culture does use the kinds of insights that dreams bring at the same time as dismissing these insights as unreal, feminine and mystical. Whereas other cultures acknowledge that information or solutions to problems come to people through dreams. For example in Malaysia a shaman had a dream that insisted women be integrated into the ceremonial structure of the tribe — a situation that did not exist prior to the dream, either in the shaman's inherited context or in the social structure of the groups that surrounded his tribe which were predominantly Moslem and even more patriarchal than his group.

Now I think that because of the situation of women in our society, they may have a kind of privileged access to those ways of knowledge, and I don't see them as antithetical to, or less significant than the more dominant, rational modes. ●

*Susan Hiller's work will be in Hayward Annual Exhibition, London August 23 to October 8.*

● *"Language and Gender" by Cora Kaplan in Papers on Patriarchy 1976.*



# Who do I think I am?

Ruth Wallsgrove



Who do you think you are?

This picture has a ghastly fascination for me. I find myself thinking "if I looked like her I wouldn't have to worry about looking like a real woman even in the baggiest overalls"... But it's quite artificial — maybe I *would* look like that with makeup and studio lights and just-permed hair. Her expression is distant, as if she couldn't care less whether she was attractive or not, but in fact she gets paid to worry about her looks.



In romantic fantasies where I'm being looked at by someone. An object to be found sexually attractive. I imagine myself more female — smaller, softened and rounded, graceful — delicate even. A real woman, in a silly pose and tight jeans.



PHOTOS BY JINI RAWLINGS

*Me as I think I am.* I don't like to be mistaken for a man, but I want to look neuter to avoid the endless hassles from men on the street, to go through the day without a single whistle or leer. Most of the time I don't want to appear, to be, very sexual, because I can't work out whether sex is important, or if it can ever be equal and free. I'm functionally dressed — I couldn't justify to myself or other feminists clothes I liked the look of but weren't practical and comfortable. I hope I look tough but friendly; I'm afraid I look rather large and clumsy. I wouldn't want to be a man at all... but do I want to be a woman in this society either?



I imagine being a revolutionary; very tough and brave and totally functional, completely unconcerned with my image. Admired not for how I *look* but what I *do*... but of course this is a glamorous fantasy too, and sexual in a male way. Me as a Hera!



*After the revolution.*

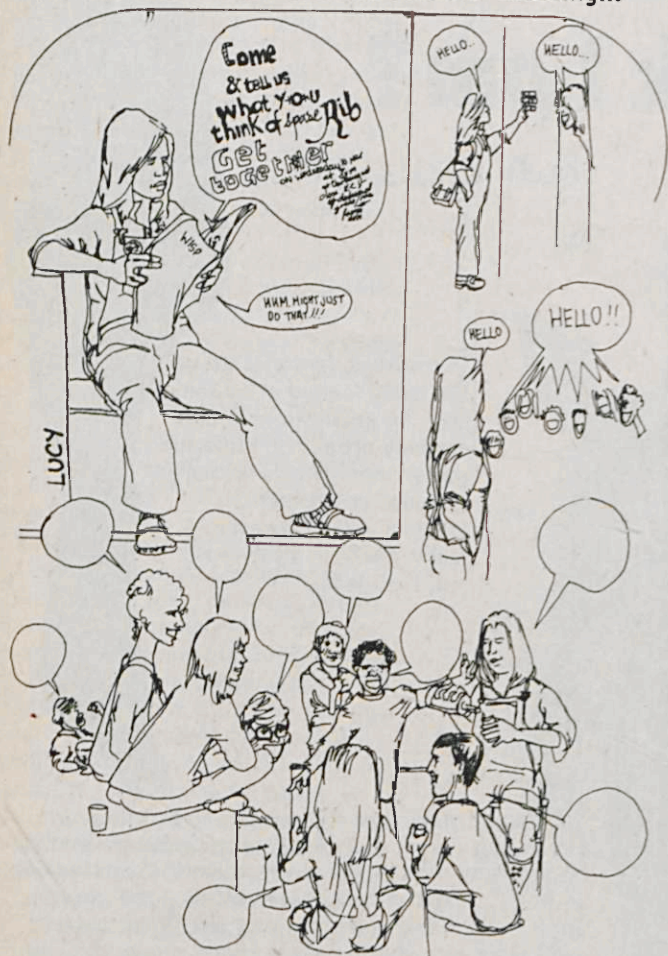
There isn't any way to know what it will be like in a completely free society, but I imagine myself in it being outside all conventions of fashion and beauty, wearing things just because they look and feel nice, and are interesting textures and patterns and colours. Looking completely mad by our present standards, in fact. I fantasise about being old and strong and wise and free. Hopelessly utopian, I'm afraid.



WHAT'S THIS NEWS  
DOING HERE?

# CLASSIFIED

The way one woman saw the readers' meeting...



Our last readers' meeting was lively, but the smallest we've ever had, though sales are going up a little so it can't be for lack of readers!!

We thought it might be because the advert was hard to read and because the meeting was on a Wednesday evening, a bad time for women with children or women coming from outside London. So we're holding our next meeting on a Saturday afternoon — July 29th at 2.30. If you can't leave the children, bring them, and one of us will take them to the park or something. Do try to come and tell us what you think of the magazine.

PS. We are planning to have reader's meetings outside London in future when we have done a 'regional' page on a particular area. Watch for details.

A woman's right to  
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BADGES FOR SALE P.34

IT TAKES  
3 MONTHS  
TO BUILD  
A BEAUTIFUL  
LOVING  
COMMUNITY  
NURSERY



LIZ HERON

Children distributed leaflets to Saturday afternoon shoppers as they marched with parents, nursery workers and other supporters through Hackney (East London) on May 20 to demand more nursery places. There are 1,000 under-fives on Hackney's 'Top Priority' waiting list, but although the Council had promised more day-care provision this year, no funds are being made available. And 'Top Priority' doesn't include all the other under-fives not considered as in 'desperate need'.

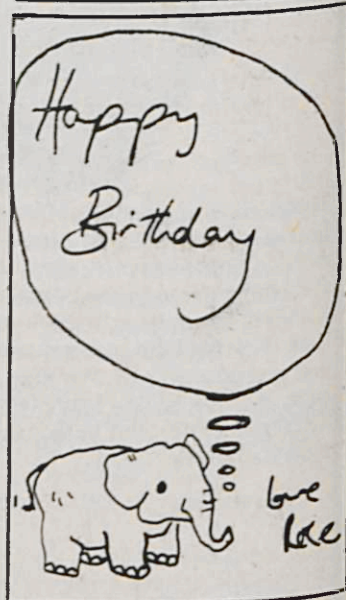
The march was organised by Hackney Under-Fives Committee with support from a wide range of local groups. It was a great success — the sun and the steel band helped!

Liz Heron

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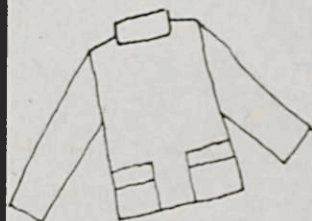
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- Feminist woman, 21 years old, wants to continue in accountancy. Does anyone know of anywhere I can work which isn't so capitalist and sexist as accountancy firms? I am prepared to work hard but will need study leave. Box 723.
- Young Swiss man in his thirties seeks position as au pair or similar for six months to one year to learn English. Write B. Santschy, 8 Cours des Bastions, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland.
- Graduate (Education) feminist seeks work in Scotland. Skills/experience — educational research, medical auxiliary work, work with physically/mentally handicapped, experienced driver, year's work in Italy, office skills. Box 713.

- Unemployed, willing to baby-sit, part-time, £20 per week, full time £30 per week. Box 721.
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WOMEN'S VOICE says HAPPY  
 BIRTHDAY SPARE RIB.  
 "Whatever the fight, don't be  
 ladylike" — Mother Jones. Fight  
 for women's rights at home, in the  
 community, at work. Fight for  
 Socialism.

## JOBS

- Red Ladder, a regionally based socialist theatre company run collectively, requires an Administrator. Apply giving full details of political and work experience, and reasons for wanting to join, to Red Ladder Theatre Company, Cobden Avenue, Leeds 12 5PB. Tel: 0532-792228.
- CAMDEN WOMENS AID needs women volunteers over the summer holidays who can drive. Please write giving approximate dates when you will be free to Frances, 92 Dorney Towers, Adelaide Road, London NW3.

## JOBS

- WORKER NEEDED four days a week The Childrens Community Centre, a day-care centre run by non-sexist, non-authoritarian under-fives for parent-worker collective. £3319 p.a. Letters to 20 Langford Road, London NW5. 01-267 5300
- HACKNEY WOMEN'S AID requires second worker. Applications by 30th June. Write All Saints Vicarage, Livermere Road, London E8

spare  
**Rib**

Needs another woman to join the collective on a fulltime basis, unfortunately on very low pay.

We work collectively, but each of us have specific areas that we are responsible for.

We need someone to work at getting the magazine much more widely distributed in trade outlets around the country, and to produce our bimonthly regional page. It involves frequent trips all over Britain to local Women's Groups and to wholesalers and retailers. A driving licence would help.

If this job sounds good to you write to Ruthie & Carole at:  
 Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS is the largest non-uniformed youth organisation in the UK and services some 6000 youth clubs through its local associations and divisions. It also employs a National staff based at its headquarters in Nuneaton for which THREE NEW MEMBERS are required.

- 1. A PROJECTS DIRECTOR**  
 To develop new projects and supervise the existing work; to support and supervise project staff. To be responsible for NAYC's European work and with the Chief Executive to co-ordinate the project work with the general youth work programme of the Association. Commencing salary within the range £5064-£5512 (Soulbury linked — under review).
- 2. A PROJECTS OFFICER**  
 To develop a programme of work with girls throughout the Association including training programmes for workers, events for girls and support for women workers. The post carries responsibility for the supervision of an experimental detached youth work project with girls employing three full time staff. Commencing salary within the range £4477-£4815 (Soulbury linked — under review).
- 3. A POLITICAL EDUCATION OFFICER**  
 To establish and develop a subscription based Political Education Service which will make programme material available to youth groups throughout the country for discussion and debate on issues of current concern, eg unemployment, housing and participation. This is a three year appointment funded by the DES. Commencing salary within the range £4477-£4815 (Soulbury linked — under review).

Further details and application forms from J Michael Butterfield, Chief Executive, National Association of Youth Clubs, PO Box 1, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 4DB. Telephone: (0682) 61921.  
 Closing date for applications: 7 July 1978.

## general

- Visiting Edinburgh? Sit, chat, read or buy feminist and socialist literature at the First of May bookshop, 45 Niddry St (off High St), Edinburgh, 031-557 1348. Open 12-6pm.
- A.I. Donor, mature, willing to father child privately. South Yorks/ Derbys/Notts areas. Genuine. Box 727.

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- BABYSLINGS. Lightweight, strong, safe. Wear front or back leaving hands free. £4.20. Money back guarantee. Barbara Trynor, 18 Spring Street, Ripponden, Nr Halifax, Yorks.



# CLASSIFIED groups

Note: New reduced classified ad rates for sisters looking for or starting local women's liberation groups. 5p/word; 7p/capitals; 30p box numbers.

- **GAY AND IN NALGO?** Then join Nalgay, the Nalgo Gay Group. SAE for details from 7 Pickwick Court, West Park, London SE9.
- **CHESHUNT-BROXBORNE-HODDESON.** Are there other women who want to start a feminist group in this area? Write: Janet, 172 Ware Road, Hoddeson, EN11 9EX.
- **ROMAN CATHOLIC feminists unite!** 01-886 0779. Box 699.
- **Feminists—**are there any near Chesterfield? Maya and Fabienne, Danesmoor 4184
- **Women's Health Group** meets alternate Tuesday 7.30. Colpitts Hotel, DURHAM. Contact address. Janis Mogle, 64 Attwood Tce, Tudhoe, Co Durham or phone Laura Sparrow Crook 3492
- **Women's Study Group.** We are meeting to plan a series of discussions on topics relevant to women and the women's movement. Meetings alt Wednesdays 7.30. Place not yet definite. Contact Linda Perks, 10 Low Row N Bitchburn, Crook, Co Durham. Crook 3004
- **TAMWORTH.** Is there a feminist group formed/formed, or is anyone interested in starting one? Theresa 021-327 2041 (day).

## contacts

- **WEST KENT.** Interested in becoming a gay befriender? Write 2 Harmony Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent or phone 0892 24218
- **BARNET WOMEN'S AID** needs new members to help us fight for a refuge. Phone Angela 349 0729
- **American guy** wishes to meet English girl with marriage in view. Box 726.
- **SEQUEL** — voluntary free publication for isolated lesbians. 75 Agar Grove, London NW1.
- **ARE YOU SEEKING** nation wide female contacts etc. Long standing, sincere and discrete service. Send sae or stamp to 'Ariadne', The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT.
- **Homosexual? Lesbian? So are we.** Try phoning London Friend to talk about it, any evening between 7.30 and 10pm on 01-359 7371.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY SPARE RIB

With lots of gay love from  
Gay Sweatshop Theatre Co

See you at our benefit . . .

### TOM ROBINSON GAY SWEATSHOP

Sunday July 9th. Telephone:  
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Venue to be announced or read  
Gay Pride Week bulletins

## \* HAPPY BIRTHDAY \*

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10p + sae or 9 for £1 Incl (p&p).  
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## ABORTION Advice?

### TELEPHONE

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Bournemouth	02016 77720
Brighton	0273 509726
Cardiff	0222 372389
Chester	0244 27113
Glasgow	041 204 1832
Leeds	0532 443861
Liverpool	051 227 3721
London	01 222 0985
Manchester	061 236 7777
Sheffield	0742 738326

### BPAS

Charitable Trust.  
for Pregnancy Testing, Abortion and Sterilisations  
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At our own non-profit clinics

## accommodation offered

- **LEFT WING** woman with children offers accom (farmhouse outskirts Cardiff) to similar. Box 724.
- **COUNTRY COMMUNITY** seeks new members not income sharing or aiming at self sufficiency, but emphasis on role sharing (ie male and female roles, expertise, decision making etc) and ecological living creating a socialist alternative. Please write with some details + sae for info. Box 725.

## accommodation wanted

- A member of the **SPARE RIB** Collective is desperately looking for accommodation for herself and her 4 year old daughter. Must be in the Westminster borough area to retain place at government nursery for Natasha. Please telephone Carole at Spare Rib 253 9793 or 624 5343 home.

- Pam and Louis (12 months) moving to Manchester July need home in friendly communal household. Contact 25 Lillieshall Road, Clapham London SW4.
- **COMMUNAL** house? Feminist and son desperately need home with SENSITIVE people and kids. Share everything. Val 01-769 4858.
- Mature business lady requires long-term furnished bed-sitter, full cooking facilities, water. Good references available. Clapham area preferred or willing share flat. Box 715.
- Socialist Feminist seeks room in shared house, Camden/Islington. Marge 402 9273
- **WOMAN, DAUGHTER** 5 years want somewhere to live in the country. Box 728
- Feminist, 24, seeks room in N London house/flat, preferably Camden Borough or Highbury/Islington area. Susan 486 6688 ext 28 (days)
- Jam Today desperately need rehearsal space comprising at least one large room, that won't disturb anyone or that is sound proofable. It must be lockable with 24hr access, preferably easily accessible from street. Low cost. Terry/Allison 485 2799, Fran 254 9358
- Vegetarian woman, 23, working in Liverpool from July 15th seeks place in communal house. Contact Sue Fuller, 20 Kensington Avenue, Manchester 14.

## publications

- **THE MEANING OF ILLEGITIMACY** by Jenny Telchman. Illegitimacy examined non-pompously and from a feminist standpoint. Paperback, 50,000 words. £1.75 inc p&p from Ennglehardt Books, 3 Derby St, Newnham, Cambridge. Cheques to 'J. Telchman'.
- **WOMEN'S LIBERATION LITERATURE** or any books. Send sae for free booklist to: H. Rutovitz, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh.
- **DISCOVER MATRIARCHY** through reincarnation memory. Other women's experiences plus do-it-yourself instructions. 75p from Silver Chalice, 40 St John St, Oxford.
- **WIRES (WOMEN'S INFORMATION, REFERRAL AND ENQUIRY SERVICE)** is the Women's Liberation Movement national information service, and also produces a twice-monthly newsletter. This contains news of conferences, events, meetings, campaigns, and other activities of the WLM; nationwide news, information and news from groups as well as articles on feminist art, health, international etc — plus reviews, letters and so on. Office opening times are: Monday to Friday 10.30-4.30. Write to us or telephone if you have a query and **SUBSCRIBE** to WIRES. Sub rates £6 a year (£4 if poor); group rates £12 a year (£8 if poor) for 2 copies of each issue. Individual copies at 20p each. Copies are also available on a sale-or-not-pay basis. Individual copies 10p each. 32A Parliament Street, York. 0904 35471
- **THE COMING AGE:** magazine of the Goddess religion, 35p. 40 St John St, Oxford.
- Sappho lesbian/feminist magazine, 50p including post. Basement, 20 Dorset Square, London NW1. Meetings Tuesdays 7.30pm, Chepstow Pub, Chepstow Place, London W2.

## LOST GODDESSES OF EARLY GREECE

A Collection of Pre-Hellenic Mythology

by Charlene Spretnak

Illustrated by Edidt Geever

"... raises new and important questions about the power of myth"  
—Merlin Stone

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Available at bookstores,  
or order directly from WIND  
P.O. Box 8858 — Washington, D.C.  
for \$4.95 plus 15% for postage  
and handling (overseas, 30%)

### ISSUE 74 — EDUCATION

The September Issue will feature articles on various aspects of sexism in education, and a special fold-out poster.

- We still want to hear from people combatting sexism in junior and infant schools.
- And from any school children who want to write about their day.
- And we also want to hear from everyone who can help us get this issue widely distributed in schools. Would teachers and others please contact Susan Hemmings, Spare Rib as soon as possible.

**SPECIAL OFFER FOR SPARE RIB READERS.** See page 14 for special offer and discount on new book of fifteen feminist short stories, **TALES I TELL MY MOTHER**



COPYDATE 30 JUNE FOR PUBLICATION 18 JULY

Rates 10p per word, 15p caps, £1.50 for semi-display (semi-boxed ad), 60p for Box Number.

New reduced rates for local women's liberation groups, 5p per word, 7p caps, 30p box numbers.

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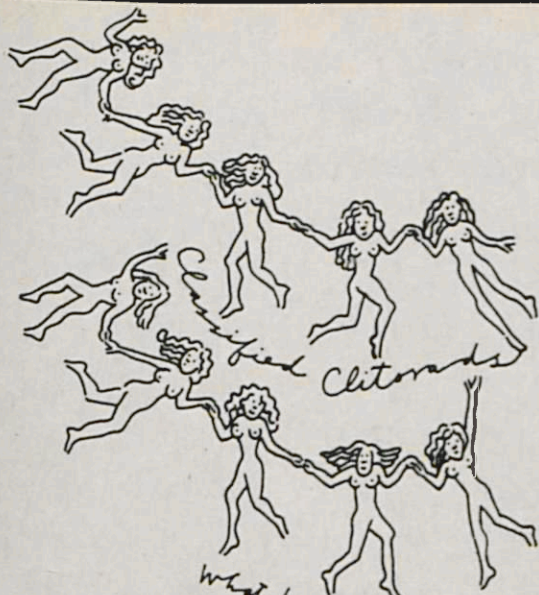
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# CLASSIFIED



What hums like a bee?  
What swells like the sea?  
What roils like jam?  
Oh, a clitoram.

What's proper and bright?  
What's dark as drama?  
What's deeper than night?  
A clitorama! Take your fins clitorine!  
An ideal companion Find your mighty clitorinity!  
is the neat clitoranium! Have a vibrant clitoribram!  
(Do I own mine? for a honey clitoramey!  
Does it own me? Well, it's not for sale  
and it's not for free.) Some dreams come true  
upon a star.  
Would yours come on a  
clitorar?  
T.D. 78

## Celebrate your sexuality

Many women feel out of touch  
with their sexuality, cannot  
reach orgasm, but are nervous  
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In our warm, supportive groups  
with clear information learn  
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Kate 01-450 3038.
- Woman psychotherapist (Jungian)  
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- INNER LIBERATION. We are an  
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Buddhist practice. May all beings  
find the joy of their true potential.  
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Cumbria or tel. 0229 54019.

## travel

- LIFT EXCHANGE CENTRE  
arranges contact between people  
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and regular London commuting.  
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# WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and  
having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know  
more about them and their use than most.

The most important thing to remember is, **that they do work** — providing the woman has no violent prejudice  
against the use of artificial sexual stimulation. Some women  
find the shape off-putting. The phallic symbolism, deliberately  
created by the makers to emphasize its sexual usage, gives  
them the impression that it is meant to be used as an artificial  
penis, and indeed it can and is so used. Some women,  
however, find the effect — when used in this way — to be  
more numbing than stimulating.

The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used  
for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose  
has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their  
book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book  
they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to  
bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a  
climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is  
used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is  
particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be  
slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for per-  
sonal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes  
on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality  
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## SPIDERWOMAN THEATRE COMPANY

Spiderwoman, an exuberant six woman theatre company from New York, played for four days in April at the Oval Theatre, London. After a European tour, they're back in Britain in July. Try to see them—they're fantastic.

In *Women in Violence* they explore violence against women, violence between women and the violence we're led to inflict on ourselves. The show works as a montage—the women clown, joke, repeat themselves hypnotically, talk over one another, jostle for position with the audience. Their clothes dazzle with tricks and colour, their faces bend like rubber, their timing is perfect. The kaleidoscope falls still and one woman will tell us a story, acting out each part as the others gather round and listen. She may be a shy little girl staying with an aunt and uncle. He keeps flashing at her on the stairs, his face like *this*—sneering and smirking. She daren't tell. Aunt sends her off to town with him—as they walk back along the railroad track he says he



# REVIEWS

could fuck her and kill her and leave her right there—screaming, she runs back, bursts into the house crying "I hate him! I hate him!"—so painfully, a small girl in panic—and the other five turn on her, encircle her chanting, "What did you *do* to him, Jane? What did *you* do to him, Jane?" The scene dissolves into the next.

Their other show, *The Lysistrata Numbah*, is threaded together by a basic story line. I preferred the looser knit of *Women in Violence*, but they do have fun with the famous tale of the Greek women who refused to have sex with their husbands unless they gave up war. Finally five of them writhe on the floor, stroking themselves, then each other, discovering they don't need men . . . "That's disgusting, I give up" shouts a soldier.

Here too they interweave scenes (the group takes its name from the Hopi goddess of creation who taught her people to weave, always

including a flaw in the design to allow her spirit to find its way out to freedom). The apparent anarchy is tightly controlled. There's a Tammy Wynette sendup ("Give him two arms to fracture and something warm to punch on . . ."), an Oil of Ulay routine ("Does your skin cream make you look older than you'd like? older than *he* likes?") "Men grow old as well as women—no, better"); a clothespeg stands in for a cigar—the cigar just one representation of men's power over women, the clothespeg just one way Spiderwoman subverts it.

Mood jumps from dirty jokes ("Women's locker room humour", they call it) to pathos and on again . . . The women are mixed in race, age and size—it delighted me to see heavy women so confident and agile in their bodies, so happy in self-parody, though some in the audience couldn't take the role changes, the stereotyping, the laughs that could be seen as being at



women's expense. For instance, *Women in Violence* opens with all six coming on stage to say hello in a range of 'feminine' ways, including the overweight, over-made-up, middle aged American hostess with wig, drawling and coming on sexually at her audience—"Well hel-lo there . . ."

This isn't simple didactic feminist theatre, thank God, not strait-laced, and straight to the point. It makes many



PHOTOS BY LAURENCE SPARHAM (LFL)



English plays and players look so staid and prim. Ideas run riot, lines feed on one another, the women work from their own experience, let their bodies be fully themselves, and so spin off beyond their six selves, beyond stage realism or true confessions.

Jill Nicholls

Spiderwoman Theatre Company  
return to London July 11-16 at  
Action Space, Drill Hall, Chenies  
Street, WC1 (01-637 7664), then  
July 19-22 at Jackson's Lane  
Community Centre, Archway  
Road, N6 (01-340 5226).

## WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING HERE?

by Gay Sweatshop  
Women's Company

Five women bound onto the stage in satin pyjamas singing "Take your badge from your pocket, Put it where it should be, On The Street" and, I have to admit, my heart sinks. This is old ground, dealing with 'coming out', not just as a lesbian but, of course, as an active feminist—from isolation to full-blooded sisterhood in an hour. It seems all so simple on the

stage, so why is it still so difficult in reality?

I found it agreeable, and laughed heartily at all the jokes—I have a weak spot for such exchanges as "When you go out with a man, does he buy the wine?" "Oh no, dear, I draw the line there." "You don't drink?" "I don't go out with men." But the play is theatrically a mess, especially in its choreography, music and direction, which is disappointing given that the whole play was produced by women—lighting, sets, administration and all. The new company has enthusiasm but they don't come to grips with anything. (Five minutes apiece for custody battles, non-monogamy, alcoholism—which is put together with being working class—and orgasms.) The play is sentimental, and unthinkingly racist (the non-feminist characters are all either black or foreign). It didn't make me think, and then again I don't know what it would mean to a non-feminist audience either as the funniest bits were all the 'in' references.

Ruth Wallsgrove

readers may occasionally find the chatty style irksome, but the book seems to me to be that rare find: a feminist book accessible not only to feminists.

*The Place of Birth* is another welcome publication. 'A Woman's Right to Choose' (where to have a baby) is its overall perspective, and its main emphasis is to question current medical 'knowledge'—and DHSS policy—that hospital births are more desirable than births at home. This is a multi-author book with contributions by a variety of professionals, and it is written with considerable awareness of and sensitivity to the rights and needs of women. The editors are concerned with increasing the number of home births, and with unhelpful, insensitive and irrational hospital policies. Some of the book can be faulted by feminists; for example, W.M.O. Moore asserts that a previous second trimester abortion should rule out a subsequent home birth—an assertion made on the basis of very little evidence, if any. And Peter Lomas, a psychoanalyst writing an interesting "interpretation of obstetric practice", concludes that the "drive to control childbirth by technical measures... may derive some of its force from unconscious feelings of antipathy towards the process of procreation", going on to suggest that conflict between men and women has a part to play. I feel it is a pity that he fails to identify the drive to control childbirth as male, as well as the fact that it is an unequal power relationship which underlies the 'conflict' between the sexes.

However, I found most of the book to be a carefully considered critique of the way medical decisions are made and carried out. On the whole it is quite readable, the more statistically-orientated articles being the main difficulty. While Christine Beels' book is wholeheartedly recommended for any woman contemplating childbirth, this book provides the more detailed ammunition that may be necessary when women are faced with particularly dogmatic professionals who insist on questionable procedures and/or hospital births. Martin Richards concludes in his chapter that "Consumers must attempt to influence policy at every level... For too long they have been passive in the face of changes foisted on them by the medical profession." Both books can be useful tools for achieving that end.

Jill Rakusen

## THE WOMEN'S ROOM

by Marilyn French

(Andre Deutsch £5.95)

"I can't see ahead yet, only backward." Mira Ward walks alone on a storm swept beach, recounting her life and reflecting on it. "The great literature of the past... doesn't tell you how to deal with real endings."

*The Women's Room* is an ambitious feminist novel. It is honest and thoughtful, concerned with issues which range from the nature of happiness, reality and death, to questions of male domination and capitalism. Mira's narrative depicts, through a large cast of characters, two very different groups of women: a friendship network of suburban housewives in 1950s America, and a community of women student friends at Harvard in the late '60s and early '70s.

Mira Ward is a thoughtful (also prissy and uptight) heroine, a seeker after truth who "had by fifteen decided on most of the assumptions she would carry for the rest of her life... Unfortunately, she forgot these things and had to remember them the hard way." Near rape at college, near obliteration as the perfect wife of Norm the normal, and invisibility as a mature student at Harvard in high heels and a three-piece knit suit.

At Harvard "everything opened up, anything seemed possible". She found loving women friends, a loving relationship with a man, a feminist way of understanding her life and world. But she found that everything was not possible. Mira finally had to choose between obliteration and invisibility along with love, or to embrace loneliness in choosing her own life. One of Mira's preoccupations concerns the power of material necessity and established male-dominated institutions. "I myself don't much enjoy books.... where▶

# BOOKS

## THE CHILDBIRTH BOOK

by Christine Beels

(Turnstone £2.50);

## THE PLACE OF BIRTH

Edited by Sheila Kitzinger

and John A. Davis

(OUP £7.50)

*The Childbirth Book* is the first feminist book on childbirth to be produced in this country, and well worth waiting for. It's a handbook primarily, so if you're hoping for a political tract, you'll be disappointed. Of course, politics permeates the entire book—explicitly, for example, in the section devoted to the Politics of Midwifery; implicitly, the feminist perspective shows through in the questions the author asks, and then tries to answer, in its being grounded on women's experiences, and in Angela Owen's drawings—where the women actually look real.

All issues are dealt with knowledgeably, realistically and sensitively—quite an achievement when few obstetricians themselves appear to be capable of being 'knowledgeable' rather than opinionated! Concerning where to have a baby, space is devoted to the advantages of

a home birth, while a woman's desire for a hospital birth is neither put down nor the problems ignored. Likewise with the subject of pain relief, Christine attempts to dispel the idea that women who use drugs have 'failed', while at the same time, drugs (and their effects) are put in a realistic light, and the reasons why many women have a bad time, because of unsupportive staff perhaps, are examined.

The book does have some weaknesses, but these are minor. So, nit-picking: occasionally the author assumes that certain words (eg 'fontanelles') do not need explaining; and at one point I think she assumes too readily that all black women will automatically be given a test for sickle cell anaemia. The biggest weakness is in 'drugs during pregnancy' where coffee and nicotine are mentioned to the exclusion of everything else; perhaps the most obvious omission is alcohol. However, the DHSS anti-pregnant-women-smoking campaign is put into perspective, avoiding the usual guilt-inducing propaganda that must have affected every pregnant smoker, past or present. Throughout, the book is full of hints on how to get through the system in one piece; at the same time, Christine encourages women to work for changes in the system from which others who follow can benefit. Some

Stockists of British and American  
feminist literature

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the outside world is so ... overwhelming, that the individual hasn't a chance." But what chance is there, Mira asks, for a woman in an individual heterosexual couple, to transcend social circumstances, find both love and self-fulfillment on equal terms?

"Some men escape. Some men do," Mira insisted.

"For a while maybe. And by themselves, as individuals, some men would. But the institutions get us all in the end...." Val said grimly.

"I won't believe that," Mira said. But she changed her mind."

Although I didn't always agree with Mira's philosophical reflections or the political arguments expressed by various characters in the book, I enjoyed discussing and arguing with them in my head. However I didn't find the writing immediate and vivid enough to make the characters come alive and to make me care very deeply about what happened to them. Situations were often summarised and interpreted in general terms, told rather than evoked through detail and dialogue and creation of atmosphere. One exception was the moving encounter between changed, radicalised Mira and her suburban, privately educated sons. The political conversations often read like speeches. It's difficult to write so that the political issues are convincingly embedded in the thoughts and actions of the characters — perhaps because so much needs challenging, there is so little feminist fiction and it's important to get the messages across. So maybe the more feminist

novels and short stories get written and published the easier it will become. Despite my reservations, I enjoyed reading *The Women's Room*. It has energy and integrity. A lot of women will enjoy getting their teeth into it.

Stef Pixner

## WEB OF VIOLENCE

A Study of Family Violence

by Jean Renvoize

(RKP £4.95)

The image of a 'web of violence' suggests that generations of people (certain types!) are caught in a mesh of uncontrollable abuse of each other, ranging from incest to 'granny bashing'. Whilst it is certainly true that the family is one of the most dangerous groups to belong to (for instance most murders are domestic), it is hardly useful to ascribe domestic violence, in all its forms, fundamentally to generational factors — his father beat his mother, so he beats his wife and so on ....

Repeatedly, Jean Renvoize suggests that this is the root cause of intra-familial abuse, a notion which is almost seductively simple in the way it lends itself to an all too easy reinforcement through anecdotal descriptions. Nowhere in the book is there any proper analysis of the way in which domestic violence is institutionalised through the social relations of the family, legal structure, housing and so on.

However, the most glaring omission in this 'study' of familial violence must surely be the almost total silence on women's oppression. A telling mark of her antagonism to feminism occurs in her treatment of incest. How is it possible that when incest comes to light it emerges that the mother of the family has often known of it for some while? — Fear of the father coupled with economic dependence? The isolation of women in the family? Is she also threatened and abused? Instead we are told that the mother may be relieved that it is happening since she may be frigid herself and at least it keeps infidelity in the family!! Readers who manage to stagger this far through the book will not be surprised to learn also that in certain 'slum' conditions "Dad breaks the girls in".

The National Women's Aid Federation is described as though it were an outpost of the Red Army on the march to Camden, in contrast with the "animal warmth of the packed Chiswick living room". The collective anger

of women against physical, sexual and emotional abuse is seen as ... "pointless... to replace male domination by female domination".

In her examination of existing research Jean Renvoize backs up Gayford's view that it is in the interests of "scientific objectivity" to discard large numbers of questionnaires, out of a conviction that the women were lying, unwilling to co-operate or suffering from language difficulties!

It is, to say the least, unfortunate, that a book with no identification with the people it attempts to write about, other than moral indignation, should attempt to fill a gap in an area where work is so badly needing to be done.

Maureen Hanscombe  
Sue Lee

## THE SEX ROLE

SYSTEM

edited by Jane Chetwynd  
& Oonagh Hartnett

WOMEN, SEXUALITY  
and SOCIAL CONTROL

edited by Carol Smart  
& Barry Smart

(Routledge & Kegan Paul,  
£2.95 each)

One of the main arguments used against any social change, and particularly against women, is that the divisions in society are 'natural', rooted in human biology, and therefore inevitable. Much scientific theory gives authority to this 'common sense' view. Both these collections of essays start by challenging this and try to provide alternative explanations of sex differences. But they adopt very different frameworks and so have different implications for change.

The editors of *The Sex Role System* account for the position of women simply in terms of sex-role stereotyping. They believe that current stereotypes are "not merely inadequate but positively detrimental to creative thinking and the development of mature adults..." They are optimistic that stereotypes are being challenged, by the Women's Liberation Movement for example, and will be replaced by a "person orientated ethos". But no attempt is made to explain how the sex role system has developed, though they do believe that its components are related to the "entire value system" of society. The latter is never specified.

Susan Lipshitz, in an interesting chapter on 'Women

and Psychiatry', (one of the few that does relate women's oppression to the family), defines precisely the limits of this approach: "psychological research can, by definition, only describe the status quo". So different contributions examine the "powerful cultural restraints operating in adolescence and pre-adolescence", the way stereotyping operates in studies of the family, at work and in sociology generally. The book's failure is that although these descriptions do illustrate the pervasiveness of sexism, they offer little perspective for change. Hilary Land describes the assumptions built into the tax and social security systems, but doesn't link this to the struggles around the 5th demand of the WLM. Pleas are made for more varied and flexible lifestyles and for sociologists to abandon their sexist assumptions. Feminists are lumped with professional women and seen to provide alternative models.

The conclusion we are left with from most of this book is a 'moral' criticism of traditional attitudes and roles, which are seen as arbitrary. This implies that attitudes could be changed through strength of will rather than needing a radical restructuring of society.

In strong contrast to this, *Women, Sexuality and Social Control* situates the oppression of women clearly in "the distinction between work and home, the public and the private [which] is grounded in the structure of capitalist society". Each contribution analyses different aspects of the complex and concealed ways in which women are socially controlled. 'The Coercion of Privacy' develops the argument that women are controlled "principally within the private domain", living their lives in a "private prison", the nuclear family, in which their problems (battering, drugs, depression etc) are invisible. This perspective is used to explain the low criminal involvement of women. Two empirical studies show that traditional assumptions about female delinquency (that it is a rebellion against or ambivalence to the feminine role, always involving sexual delinquency) are clearly false. In 'Who needs prostitutes?' Mary McIntosh examines sex researchers' ideas about female and male sexuality. She argues that this ideology has a material basis in the division of labour "organised through the monogamous 'patriarchal' family" and proposes that this analysis



needs to be extended "to show how the ideology is produced and reproduced". 'Doctors and their Patients' shows how the relationship between GP and patient contains aspects of control and power, particularly for middle-aged women who tend to collude in this perception of the relationship. Barrett and Roberts consider the problem that would arise if women, isolated as housewives, didn't even have this support, and the extent to which the women's self-help health movement can both provide support and challenge the domination of the medical profession. 'Accounting for Rape' analyses rape as a form of social control, both as physical coercion and through the threat or fear of rape, strongly communicated through the media. The importance of links being made between academic research and action for social change is discussed explicitly in the final chapter 'Studying Rape'.

The development of 'Women's Studies' has led to a vast amount of academic research, much of it done in the name of feminism. We have to distinguish between research which provides insights into the nature of our oppression and hence a strategy to fight it, and that work which merely describes it. I think these two books illustrate the difference.

Esther Saraga

## THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN

A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism

by Roberta Hamilton

(Allen & Unwin, £2.95

paperback)

Roberta Hamilton is a feminist in the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement. Her book is

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concerned with questions women everywhere have been asking: why have women been subordinated? and how has our oppression varied through history? She seeks answers in a particular period of English history, and through this tries to show that feminism needs to develop a new type of theory to match the questions it is asking.

The period she chooses is the 17th century, because, she argues, it was at the time of the transition from feudalism to capitalism that women's role changed economically and ideologically in a way that still affects us today. She examines the changes in the family from the productive unit of feudal society, where women played a vital role in family survival, to the privatised unit of today, where a woman's life has become defined as family life, although she might have roles apart from wife and mother. The analysis is based on the marxist idea that the mode of production determines women's role in society, so that changes in the mode of production have profound implications for women.

Marxism has not, however, given us a framework for understanding how ideas about women change in a period of economic transition. Ms Hamilton argues that the feminist emphasis on reproduction and the theory of patriarchal ideology are necessary for this understanding, since marxism has taken insufficient account of how biology has given all men a weapon against all women. She shows how the Protestant Reformation radically altered the Catholic view that "women were evil and sex was evil"; the Protestant ideal was the family as partnership, "a little church and little state", ruled over by the husband as patriarch. Though subordinate, the wife shared a close and loving relationship with her husband; sex was redefined as enjoyable — provided it took place within marriage. While women appear to have gained from the Reformation, they also suffered from the narrower definition of their place within the family.

Roberta Hamilton concludes from this that two theoretical perspectives are necessary for analysing women's oppression; marxism and the "feminist theory of patriarchy", and that it is not yet possible to unite them. While her analysis reveals new insights, I am not sure whether the theory of patriarchy is developed

enough to be a useful tool. She tends to separate economics and ideology into parallel structures requiring parallel analyses so that we lose sight of the interconnections. But the questions she asks are important, not only for the growth of feminist theory, but also — because theory helps us to identify the mechanisms of our oppression — for the strategy we decide upon to win our liberation.

Karen Margolis

## BOOKS Children's



## SONG FOR A DARK QUEEN

by Rosemary Sutcliffe  
(Pelham Books £3.75)

Of all the warrior queens, Boudicca (or Boadicea as the Romans called her), Queen of the Iceni, looms large in the public imagination. In this excellent new historical novel the well-known children's writer, Rosemary Sutcliffe (*Eagle of the Ninth* and many more) tells the story afresh. She describes a matriarchal tribe who are led to Holy War, not just tribal revolt against Roman imperialism, because of Roman insults to their Queen and royal daughters.

Sutcliffe's feel for the historical moment and her attention to historical realities and conflicts means that Boudicca can be seen for the first time in context, as the royal woman of a tribe where women take precedence. It is the Romans' inability to understand the significance of this social structure that is to bring about the sacking of three Roman cities and — almost — their annihilation.

This is also a novel that pulls no punches — rape, a central event here, and butchery form an integral part in one of the most honest accounts of the horrors of war in a children's book that I have

come across. Highly recommended for 13 years and upwards.

Rosemary Stones  
(Children's Rights Workshop)

## MICKY'S KITCHEN CONTEST

by Kurt Baumann,

illus. by Michael Foreman  
(Andersen Press £3.25)

A dad in an apron battling out with his son over which of them is to do the washing up is the unexpected subject matter of this new picture book. A good idea this, with a number of fearful fantasy retributions promised to the lad if he doesn't submit to his mild but determined Dad, with ingenious strategies from the boy to avoid giving in. The book ends with Dad saying 'please' and them doing the dishes together. Outstanding illustrations from the committed Michael Foreman (see his *All the King's Horses*, SR49, for example), but the long text flogs the idea to death. For up to 8 year olds.

Andrew Mann, CRW

## FILMS

### HARLAN COUNTY USA

directed by Barbara Kopple  
The Other Cinema



Women argue it out

In June 1973 the coal miners at Brookside, Kentucky voted to join the United Mine-workers of America. When the Eastover Mining Company refused to grant the United Mineworkers union recognition, a strike began which was to last 13 long months. This documentary tries to situate the strike within the history of



miners' struggles in the Appalachians and within more recent efforts to democratize the union.

The film concentrates on the barbarity and inhumanity of the mine owners and operators and on the crucial and supportive role of the miners' wives in the strike. Conditions in the coal mining communities in the Appalachian mountains today are about on a par with those in the Welsh valleys in the 1920s. Mines are privately owned. Many miners are non-unionised and working conditions are horrendous. People live in small communities which are entirely company dominated. The local store is company owned or controlled and if there is one community building the odds are that it will be a Baptist Church built by company consent on company land.

Harlan County USA is a powerful documentary of a long and brave struggle. But it also shows the lack of theoretical foundations in the American labour movement. The underlying assumption seems to be that if the coal operators were simply more humane and recognised the workers' "constitutional rights as American citizens" all would be well. There is no recognition that the American capitalist system may be at fault or that the mineworkers of America have anything in common with other members of the working class. Their oppression is seen to flow from only one source — the mine owners and operators. The role of the state, and the church, indeed the whole system, is barely acknowledged.

This is all disturbing enough but in addition even latent feminism is absent at Brookside. The Harlan County women are shown as brave and forthright and it is fair to say that without their support the strike would have been lost. Their physical presence on picket lines, their arguments with judges and sheriffs, their arrests, their emotional support, and indeed their film, are all crucial. But these correct and courageous actions are almost entirely based on pure self-sacrificing principles. They have no independent demands and little awareness of their own particularly oppressed state as women.

The women may have won the strike at Harlan County but both they and the United Mineworkers of America are in desperate need of political consciousness raising. Only then can past victories be firmly consolidated and future struggles more easily won.

Kerry Schott



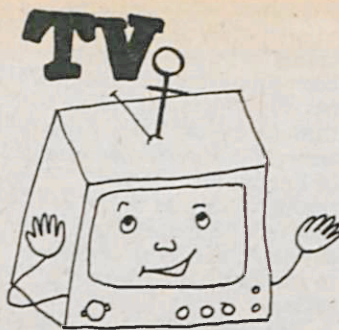
They're glamorous and tough

### CHARLIE'S ANGELS. I.T.V. (Tuesdays 7.30pm)

Yes, *Charlie's Angels* is a very badly made programme, costing over 330,000 dollars an episode to make—it has sloppy scripts, dull to inept camerawork, wooden acting, the whole works. As the producer says: "We're more concerned with hairdos and gowns than the twists and turns of the plot..." And ostensibly it's made to appeal to the same people that 'Pan's People' danced for, men who need some minimal excuse for ogling bare-legged women. Irredeemably sexist. But—captivated in spite of myself—I think it's both more interesting and more dangerous than, say, the Miss World contest. Charlie's Angels look pretty competent with their guns, and although they are not quick-witted they manage to out-manoeuvre the even dumber men around them. For all their bikinis, they come across as sexless—rather sporty and good fun, actually. I don't suppose the men who sit focused to their thighs notice, but it seems that the programme is also catering for an entirely different fantasy.

One 12 year old girl I talked to said she would like to be a Charlie's Angel when she grew up—because "They're glamorous and tough", and never fall for the men they lead on episode after episode. In real life we're all faced at puberty with a choice between being feminine, attractive and loved and being active and independent; but Charlie's Angels manage to do both. They are good at skiing, tennis, swimming, dancing, riding etc etc with not a curl out of place. They are a young girl's complete dream.

And that is what is sinister about this programme. In this



'liberated' world, girls might be dissatisfied with having to choose between being women and being people. So they are now told they don't have to make the choice. They can be beautiful and clever, they can have a husband and babies and be top brain surgeons—well, they can believe it until it's too late, and find that they are stuck where women have always been stuck.

And the programme itself is very clear in where it draws the limits; one of the Angels isn't so model-girly, is a bit more sharp, and she is subtly put down by men, in the programme and by publicity outside (she's not very nice, say the publicity blurbs). Little girls don't want to be her. In fact, the programme is in reaction to us in the Women's Liberation Movement. Of course you can be liberated, it says—and now you'll all stop struggling and go home, won't you? But maybe it'll backfire on them yet. The girl who wanted to be them was clear about what she liked best about Charlie's Angels. "Well—they're women and they beat men."

Ruth Wallsgrove

mind paying—we're real fans—but it's such a let-down. The sets are the same, the cardboard model of her they bring on while she's changing, the white dress they unfold to make a screen to show close-ups of her face. She goes on about honesty as though she's talking direct to you, but it's like seeing the same film twice."

Diana Ross was pure showbiz. First she seduced the men with purple sequins and lines like "I want you to know I feel absolutely terrific tonight—that's what I want for you, I want you to feel terrific", then played single mum, confiding in us about her three little daughters. As family entertainer she made us link arms and sing along with 'Reach Out And Touch Somebody's Hand', even going down into the audience to touch a few hands herself.

No time for a press conference this year, she says, so she'll answer our questions. "What are you doing after the show?" shouts one joker. ("Anything you like" she laughs, "I needed that.") "How d'you stay so slim?" "When are you coming back?" She's sentimental about the good old days of the "super-duper Supremes", but then so am I. Her medley of 'Stop in the Name of Love', 'Reflections', 'You Can't Hurry Love' was dazzling — old favourites that hold the audience together, an audience that has grown with her from 'Baby Love' through 'Lady Sings the Blues' to the smoochier, smoother tunes of *Mahogany* and beyond.

She left us with a phoney vision of black success, explaining how, "young, gifted and black", she stretched to take "that one giant step" and made it to the top. On a crescendo of 'Ain't no mountain high enough' she left, coming back in a fluffy white floor-length fur to kiss us all goodbye.

Jill Nicholls

## MUSIC

### DIANA ROSS At the London Palladium

As the lights came up, two women tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I was from the press. "It's exactly the same as last year" they moaned, "except then it was £5 for the front row, and here it's £15 in the circle. We didn't



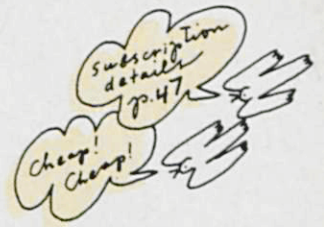


**'Henny' from the quartet band exploring sounds**

countries who explored sounds more than the other groups and were the only group apart from FIG to play totally improvised sets.

We couldn't all have been lesbians, but at times it did seem like it, especially during

Meg Christian and Holly Near's performance as they evangelised both lesbian love and Olivia Records, the American feminist label they work with. "People who criticise us for doing love songs have missed the point"



said Meg. "Loving women is a political act."

Well yes, but is it really enough, are the politics intrinsic to loving women enough to cut through the relentless sentimentality of Meg's songs? I feel ambivalent about criticising Olivia – its very existence *is* encouraging, and the sooner more women's record companies are set up, the less it will matter what Olivia isn't, because the full spectrum of women's music and ways of working will be covered.

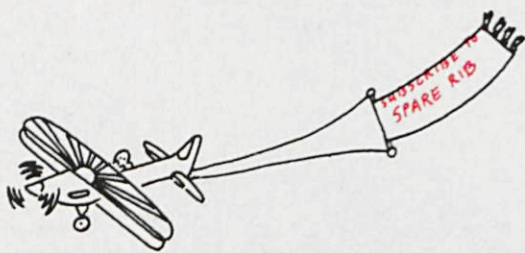
My main disappointment with the festival was the lack of contact between musicians, and between musicians and audience – language problems and the size of the event meant that any discussions about music, setting up more places in Europe for women to play, starting record companies etc were haphazard. I left Copenhagen with the questions I went with: How best do you combine the celebratory and political functions of women's cultural festivals? What kind of alternative structures do we need? .... how does women's music relate to other political/alternative music, for example the (very male dominated) music movement in Sweden?

**Lindsay Cooper**

I've always had mixed feelings about festivals, especially big ones, and Copenhagen had most of what I like and hate about them – enjoyment tempered by reservations ranging from minor irritations with the organisation to worries about what the festival was achieving.

We arrived from the small and friendly women's festival we'd just played at in Eindhoven, Holland, into the overcrowded jazz club whose half male audience put many women off ("It's just voyeurism and alcoholism down there"). A pity, because all the best music was from the jazz groups (mostly Scandinavian, dispelling my previous folksy image of Scandinavian women's music). Most interesting of the jazz groups was the quartet of women from different





## more PICTURE POST

### \*Encouraging noises

Dear *Spare Rib*

I would like to thank all at *Spare Rib* for previous issues of the magazine. It fulfils the important role of providing women who are concerned with feminist issues with a platform to discuss the issues. *SR* is the only regularly published magazine which does not try to bullshit women.

In sisterhood  
Rhianon Jones  
Coventry

### Nursing and Racism

Dear *Spare Rib*

I wonder how much research Amrit Wilson did before producing her vindictive report on 'Nursing and Racism' (*SR* 70). I have worked with many overseas students. I will admit that my experience has been limited to a small town, but nonetheless these students were never left to find their own way from the airport as stated in her article. In fact the School of Nursing went as far as to find foster parents for many of the students from overseas. Often I found that special consideration was given to overseas students, help with written work given freely whilst the remainder of our group were expected to be able to cope. Far

fewer overseas nurses were excluded from Mansfield School of Nursing than British nurses. Many of the nursing sisters, staff nurses and auxiliary nurses took the overseas students under their wings—and rightly so. I'm not saying that there's no racism at the Mansfield hospitals, but I am saying there's very little.

Yours sincerely

S A Lowe

Kimberworth Park, Rotherham

### \* Perfectly natural?

Dear *Spare Rib*

At 2.30 in the morning last week a strange man walked into our student residence, possibly with a front door key, made his way into a room on the first floor, sat down on the bed of a woman on her own, and began masturbating. The man had previously been stopped outside the same room a few nights earlier at about the same time asking for a fictitious person. Fortunately two people were still up and made sure he left the house. Considering the circumstances, a sympathetic response from the police was anticipated. After searching the house we called the police.

Two plain clothes men arrived and the intrusion was explained. When they discovered that no property had been taken or physical damage inflicted they decided that the case amounted to 'nothing'. When asked if it was unusual for an unknown man to come into a room when he has no authority to do so and to behave in such a way, to quote exactly, the policeman referred to the masturbation saying "Well, it's a perfectly natural reaction, isn't it?" He then pointed to the victim of the experience and accused her of not looking upset enough. What was he anticipating—foaming at the mouth and epileptic fits? Certainly he implied a bout of hysteria would be convenient.

It was the man's second visit to the house, and it is possible he might return. Why is it then that the police left without making any report, without taking any statements, without asking the names of the people who had seen him, and telling us that no crime had been committed?

It is surely this attitude which discourages women from reporting rape.

Yours faithfully  
Barbara Inperiali  
Judy Glasman  
London WC2

### Correction

The FPA no longer runs the family planning clinics in Tower Hamlets. The clinical service was handed over to the NHS in 1974 - 1976



'Tired Angel' - ink drawing (20x16")

LYN FOULKES



SUE MILLETT

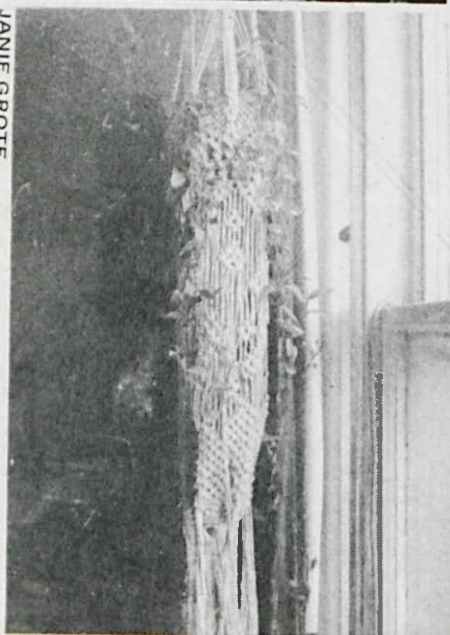


ANDREA WEBB

Top right: This collage is in vivid reds and oranges and the idea came from a newspaper diagram of the lava flow of Mount Etna. I did it during a period in which I felt very isolated and swamped by a very claustrophobic relationship. Whilst the picture was still unfinished my confidence was constantly being challenged. Richard resented my choosing to spend time sewing rather than devoting it to him and this was expressed by a bombardment of questions such as: "Is it an escape?" "What are you running away from?" I was feeling very vulnerable at the time and it took a great deal of will-power to finish the project - Andrea Webb.

Top left: This is an oil painting belonging to a friend. She does not actually know we are sending it.

Left: Women have always made things for the home. I would never have dreamed of putting them in an exhibition - they just hang on my wall and complement some of my plants - Janie Grote.



JANIE GROTE



# GETTING ON TOP OF THE JOB

## Women in Manual Trades

About four months ago I started photographing women working in manual trades. More women, including school leavers, are becoming interested in working in construction and allied trades, but despite the Sex Discrimination Act many factors operate to exclude women from those jobs.

Because it's so difficult for women to get training, many acquire their initial experience working in co-ops, independently, or as a number of women in Leeds are currently doing, working on a Job Creation Project. Some women have, after a struggle, managed to get jobs with borough councils and even private employers, but the hassles don't end there. Whatever the work situation, doing something you've always learned you *can't* do, (because that's what you've always been taught), is by no means easy.

The "women in manual trades" group, founded in 1976 by women coming into the industry, have developed an information and support network. They also give talks and workshops in schools and youth clubs. Most of the women I've photographed were involved in either the London or Leeds groups.

As women talked about their experiences it became clear that having to work in isolation — as the only woman — is one of the major problems, and the most demoralising. Lack of confidence is the other, but that often becomes a question of learning to value different ways of doing things . . . "Women tend to do the work more slowly, but we're more thorough" was something nearly all the women said.

Why choose this kind of work? This question revealed a variety of reasons, but everyone talked about the satisfaction of learning manual skills and actually enjoying the work!

Photographs and interviews by  
Liz Heron



## SHEFFIELD

### Private work

Rose and Alice are self-employed and work together. They do plumbing, carpentry and general building work.

"We worked in a co-operative with 5 men. That broke up when we left. I do find it easier to do this kind of work without men."

"You plan for what you know you can do. For instance you make sure that you haven't packed something so full that it's too heavy for you to lift."

"I've never worked for an employer. I'm sure there are a lot more hassles. We get our work mainly through a network of people we know. I'm going to do a TOPS course in a few months time and then hopefully get a job. I'm sure that things will be very different working for an employer but by then I'll have a lot more confidence than I had at the beginning."



# LONDON



**Mary — A carpenter with the GLC**

"After working in publishing for years, I decided I wanted to work with my hands. I was interested in doing this kind of work and I also feel it's very important for women to break down the barriers and have the opportunity to do skilled craft work. I wasn't at all practical before, I've just learned.

"I'm the only woman the GLC has taken on in craft work since the Sex Discrimination Act. I got an accelerated apprenticeship through the Construction Industry Training Board.

"I do my work well and I got a distinction in the City and Guilds exams, but I've never been accepted as equal to a man at work.

"I feel very isolated, as the only woman in the job. I work mainly on estates, . . . meeting tenants when I go to do the maintenance work, is the thing that has made it worthwhile. They're generally very pleased. Most of them are stuck at home all day and don't see anybody. They can talk to a woman more easily. But it's not only the company — time and time again they say 'It's great that women are getting a chance to do these jobs now'."







**Miriam — A plumber with Hackney Council**

"When you leave school there aren't many jobs you can do that are interesting. I worked in a factory and on the land for a bit. There isn't any future in the jobs open to girls. That's why I wanted to learn a skill. You do the job from start to finish. That's very satisfying, and I know it's something useful — people need to have plumbing in their houses. I also earn more than I would in a 'girl's job'."

"Strength isn't as important as people think. The men are no more likely than me to risk a back injury by carrying something that's too heavy."



**Sandy and Jill — Electricians working for a Community Housing Association also doing day release as part of their training.**

"Working together makes it a lot easier than working on your own."





"We get on really well with the men we are working with . . . that's because they're open to the idea of women learning these skills. It also makes a fantastic difference that there are 6 of us."

"It's often happened that I've learned how to do something and then lost confidence when I've started working with a man . . . it's harder for us because men are trained to think in technical ways."

". . . . and not letting blokes see what you're doing, because you're afraid of criticism."

"Even men who have no experience at all approach it with more confidence the first time — they've always been used to tools."

## LEEDS

### Job Creation Project

A Job Creation Project outside Leeds provides work for 18 people converting a huge house into a conference centre. Six of them are women.

"I don't see it necessarily as a job that I'll do for the rest of my life, but I want to broaden my experience and become more confident about doing practical things."

"The jobs I had before were boring — shop work, typing. There's more satisfaction in doing craft work."

"I was on a job with six men. There were no problems until one of the blokes had to ask how something was done. . . it was plastering and I had some experience at that. When I explained it to him he couldn't take it — a woman knowing more about the job than he did."





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5	Did you get the fruitgums Mum?	Quillan, Viv	Usage Terms: © Viv Quillin viv.quillin@gmail.com. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
5	Mrs Toms, How do you keep your floors so shiney? Oil painting		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mrs Toms, How do you keep your floors so shiney? Oil painting. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
10	Sexism Drags On		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sexism Drags On. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
10	Uniform Protest	Lee, Georgina	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Uniform Protest. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
10	Iran: No Torture?		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Iran: No Torture?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
10	US: Lay off or pay up		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for US: Lay off or pay up. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
10	Egypt: Bettie over belly dancing		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Egypt: Bettie over belly dancing. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.



10	EGA Stays OK	Phillips, Angela	Usage Terms: © Angela Phillips. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
11	Women united against rape - Aix en Provence	Jacques, Marina	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Women united against rape - Aix en Provence. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
11	Paris Bookshop attacked		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Paris Bookshop attacked. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
11	France: Rape Laws Challenged		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for France: Rape Laws Challenged. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
11	Married Rape		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Married Rape. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
11	Name Change		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Name Change. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
12	Managing women	Whitman, Lucy	Usage Terms: © Lucy Whitman
12	Ride on ...	Spedding, Carole	Usage Terms: © Carole Spedding. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
12	Unfair Partners		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Unfair Partners. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
12	El Vino's	Phillips, Angela	Usage Terms: © Angela Phillips. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
13	Husband makes bid for wife's body		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Husband makes bid for wife's body. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.



13	Jeans Squabble		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Jeans Squabble. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
13	Jubilation in Fleet St that Bill Paton had lost his case	Rawlings, Jini	Usage Terms: © Jini Rawlings
13	Fruit packers in Canterbury		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Fruit packers in Canterbury. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
13	500 women bank note examiners on strike		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for 500 women bank note examiners on strike. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
13	women barred from undersea tunnel in Japan		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for women barred from undersea tunnel in Japan. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
13	Wage packet "Only monkeys and grannies need apply"		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Wage packet "Only monkeys and grannies need apply". Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
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15	Perry and Fannie Lou Hamer	Wilmer, Val	Usage Terms: © Val Wilmer
16	Mississippi Women	Spare Rib	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mississippi Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
16	Sadie Saddlers and Beulah Rush		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sadie Saddlers and Beulah Rush. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
16	Midwife Pat White with patient in labour	Wilmer, Val	Usage Terms: © Val Wilmer
17	Mississippi Women	Spare Rib	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Mississippi Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
17	La Wanda and Ruby Lee Blanche	Wilmer, Val	Usage Terms: © Val Wilmer



17	Ruby Lee Blanche	Wilmer, Val	Usage Terms: © Val Wilmer
17	Kerry and Bobbie Blanche	Wilmer, Val	Usage Terms: © Val Wilmer
18	The Advertising Standards Authority's line on sexism	Moan, Pat; Nicholls, Jill	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for The Advertising Standards Authority's line on sexism. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.; Usage Terms: © Jill Nicholls
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19	The Advertising Standards Authority's line on sexism	Moan, Pat; Nicholls, Jill	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for The Advertising Standards Authority's line on sexism. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.; Usage Terms: © Jill Nicholls
19	ad for Mandate		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for ad for Mandate. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
20	Images of Schoolgirls	Sheppey, Linda; Hashmi, Abida; Sutton, Lisa	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for Images of Schoolgirls. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Images of Schoolgirls	Sheppey, Linda; Hashmi, Abida; Sutton, Lisa	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for Images of Schoolgirls. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
22	Rights of Women		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Rights of Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Red Therapy	Pixner, Stef	Usage Terms: © Stef Pixner
23	Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Women's Special Issue	Sebestyen, Amanda	Usage Terms: © Amanda Sebestyen
24	The Funny Side of the Street		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for The Funny Side of the Street. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
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27	A Day In The Life ...	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
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36	Spiderwoman Theatre company	Sparham, Laurence	Usage Terms: © Laurence Sparham. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial



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37	What the Hell Is She Doing Here?	Wallsgrave, Ruth	Usage Terms: © Ruth Wallsgrave
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37	The Women's Room	Pixner, Stef	Usage Terms: © Stef Pixner
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44	Getting On Top of the Job: Women in Manual Trades	Heron, Liz	Usage Terms: © Liz Heron
44	Mary - a carpenter with the GLC	Heron, Liz	Usage Terms: © Liz Heron
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45	Miriam - a plumber with Hackney Council	Heron, Liz	Usage Terms: © Liz Heron
45	Sandy and Jill - Electricians working for a Community Housing Association	Heron, Liz	Usage Terms: © Liz Heron
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